

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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NEW YORK, OCTOBER 24, 1917.

Price SIX Cents.

THE BROKEN BOTTLE; OR, A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW. *A TRUE TEMPERANCE STORY. -- BY JNO B. DOWD.*

AND OTHER STORIES



Judge Morton had seized him by the collar and shook him, and George, maddened by the wine he had drank, snatched the bottle up and dealt his father a stunning blow on the head, breaking the bottle and felling the Judge to the floor.

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THE BROKEN BOTTLE

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A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW

By JNO. B. DOWD

CHAPTER I.

LAST NIGHT AT YALE—A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW.

Yale College!

A private parlor in New Haven House, nearly opposite the famous old college.

Some two score young men seated around the tables.

Bottles and glasses covered the tables.

The popping of corks responded through the room.

And the song and jest went around.

It was a stag party—the graduates of old Yale for that year, who had met for a final parting.

"Fill up, gentlemen!" cried a handsome young gentleman, with dainty black mustache and curly locks, rising to his feet with a brimming glass of champagne in his hand.

"A toast—a toast!" ran through the room, accompanied by the jingling of glasses on the tables. "A toast from George Morton!"

"Morton—Morton! Silence!"

"Gentlemen," cried George Morton, holding his glass above his head, where it glittered and sparkled under the brilliant gaslight like a diamond goblet of nectar, "let us drink to the prosperity of old Yale—old as she is, we, her youngest born, think her more lovely than the lily-of-the-valley, and her price far above rubies. May her youth increase with age, and her children be as numerous as the leaves of the forest!"

The toast was drank amid thunderous applause.

George Morton was ever the life and soul of the gatherings of the class.

He started the songs, jests, and flashed scintillations of wit and repartee with electric inspiration.

"A song—a song! Give us a song, Morton!" cried the entire party, calling up the young gentleman again.

"Fill your glasses and join me in the chorus," he said, rising, with a brimming glass in his right hand.

Every glass was instantly filled to the brim, and each arose to his feet.

Young Morton sang, in a clear baritone, "The Star Spangled Banner," and the party joined in the chorus with such hearty enthusiasm as to shake the very walls with the volume of sound.

"Three cheers for George Morton, the best fellow in the class!" cried an enthusiastic youth, whose brain was becoming slightly addled by the frequent potations. "Hip—hip—hip—hurrah—hurrah—hurrah!"

"I say, fellows," exclaimed George, rising to his feet, "you do me too much honor, but make me feel proud of your friendship. The pleasant hours we have spent together under the shadows of glorious old Yale will never be forgotten—"

"Never—never!" interrupted a dozen voices.

"Heaven bless the old 'oman!"

"Silence, gentlemen!"

"And as a memento," continued young Morton, "of this evening's reunion, before our final parting, I propose that we pledge each other to the extent of one bottle of champagne each, and—"

"Long live George Morton, the king of good fellows!"

"Fill up, fellows—fill up for a toast!" cried Hugh McFarlane. "Here's to George Morton, a jolly good fellow—may he live to the age of Methuselah, outlive all his widows, and retain his power of suction as long as straws grow and mint-juleps circulate!"

"Here's looking at you, Hugh, my son!" said George, quaffing a glass of champagne with a bow toward Hugh McFarlane.

"May you never get cross-eyed looking that way, George!" responded Hugh, amid a general roar of laughter.

"But about the bottles, fellows," said George. "I was proposing that when we have all emptied one bottle we carry it home with us to keep sacred to the memory of this meeting and parting."

"Yes, yes—we'll do it!" came from all sides.

"I'll take two," said Hugh.

"Only one each!" cried George. "And now who will sing us 'Auld Lang Syne!'"

"I will!" cried Hugh, springing to his feet.

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And ne'er brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And days of auld lang syne?"

"Here's to Hugh McFarlane and auld lang syne!" cried Henry Banks, and the class drank with hearty good will.

"Now, fellows!" sang out George Morton, "every man take his bottle at my expense, cling to it as the storm-tossed mariner clings to a plank when night and the tempest closes around him—cling to it till it's dry as Paley Theology and as empty as—as—as—"

"An egg when the chick gets out," suggested McFarlane, amidst an uproarious burst of laughter.

"Thanks for the comparison," said George, "and then cork it up again brim full of the memories of this reunion."

"That's it—that's the thing!" cried several lustily.

"Fill it up again, fellows!" cried Hugh, and the popping of corks from several bottles, which had been placed at each man's elbow by order of Morton, together with the jingling of glasses, evinced their readiness to obey.

"All ready?" asked Hugh.

"All ready!" they responded.

Hugh cleared his throat and sang:

"Oh, Morton is a jolly good fellow!
Morton is a jolly good fellow,
Morton is a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny;
Which nobody can deny, ha! ha!
Which nobody can deny.
Oh, Morton is a jolly good fellow!
Morton is a jolly good fellow,
Morton is a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny."

So say we all of us!
So say we all of us!
So say we all!

As they joined in the song they stood up, jingling their brimming glasses together above their heads, while the walls fairly shook with the melody of their voices. Above the din the rich baritone of George Morton could be heard.

When the song was ended, George, with a gravity well becoming a man of three score and ten, looked sad at his companions and uttered in deep, solemn tones:

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not dry, but an infatuated guz-zler!"

Screams of laughter followed and he dropped into a chair and drank another glass of the sparkling beverage.

Hugh McFarlane rose up and glanced over the room with mock solemnity, until the silence of the tomb seemed to have fallen upon them.

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red! when it giveth its color in the cup; at last it kisseth like a maiden and huggeth like a wife!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared George Morton, filling his glass again. "Fill up, fellows—fill up and drink to my toast."

"A toast—a toast!"

"Here's to bright eyes and palpitating hearts—may they sparkle and flutter around us wherever we go!"

"And may our lots," added McFarlane, "be cast where they flourish like green bay trees!"

"Drink it down!"

"A song—a song from Peter McDermott!" cried Morton.

"Peter McDermott, brace up and—"

"Oh, quash it!" cried Peter, rising instantly to his feet, holding onto a chair with one hand, while waving the other for silence. Then, in a voice slightly thick, sang:

"Little Bopeep has lost her sheep,
And don't know where to find (hic),
Let 'em alone and they'll come home,
Bringing their tails behind (hic)."

Screams of merriment followed as Peter dropped into his seat exhausted.

"Seeing the gentleman's condition, let us pray," said Hugh.

"No!" cried Sam Devine, "let him (hic) sign er pledge."

"Sign er pl'dsh yoursef—you're drunk ash er biled owl!" retorted Peter.

"How are the mighty (hic) fallen!" said Morton. "Men drink wine, an' (hic) overcometh like er summer cloud."

"We won't go home till morning,
We won't go home till morning,
We won't go home till morning.
Till daylight doth appear,"

sang Hugh McFarlane, swinging upon a table and holding a bottle in one hand and a glass in the other. Some one tipped over the table and Hugh measured his length on the floor, shivering his glass into a thousand pieces.

The meeting broke up at a late hour, many of the young men being carried up to beds in the hotel, for lack of locomotive power to reach their own quarters.

CHAPTER II.

THE RETURN FROM COLLEGE—GEORGE AND HUGH.

The stately mansion of Judge Morton was brilliantly lighted up from cellar to garret. A goodly number of young people had gathered there to welcome George Morton back from Yale College, where he had graduated with high honors. They all knew him when he went away, a mere boy, and were now prepared to find him nearer to man's estate.

But in all that throng of gay young men and maidens, there was one whose heart beat faster as the hour of his arrival drew nigh.

It was Irene Hicks, the acknowledged belle of Overton, the classmate and inseparable companion of Eva Morton, George's only sister. She and George were youthful lovers when he went away, a youth of sixteen, and she a miss of fourteen summers.

But four years had passed, and they were no longer children. A few letters had been written during the first year, after which—nothing. Still, the beautiful maiden had not forgotten her youthful hero, nor the vows of constancy both had made at parting.

At last the carriage which had been sent to the station to meet him returned, bringing George and his friend, Hugh McFarlane, who had consented to spend a week with him before going to his own home.

In her joyous impulsiveness, Eva rushed out of the house and fled toward the carriage, crying:

"Brother—brother! Oh, I'm so glad you've come!"

"Out, Hugh, quick!" cried George, pushing his friend out of the carriage door. Hugh sprang out, and, of course, Eva threw her arms around his neck, covering his face with affectionate kisses.

"Oh, you dear, darling brother!" she cried, kissing him again and again. "I do love you so much!"

"Well, don't you love me just a little, sister?" George asked, alighting from the carriage and placing an arm around her slender waist.

"Oh, heavens!" screamed Eva, springing away from Hugh and staring wildly at both the laughing young men. With another feminine shriek she darted back into the house.

"Eva—Eva!" cried Irene, following the young lady to her apartment. "What in the world is the matter with you?"

"Mercy, Irene!" gasped Eva, dropping into a chair, "I've hugged and kissed the wrong man!"

"The wrong man! Why, hasn't George come?"

"Yes, and brought a friend."

"Oh!" and comprehending the mistake, Irene sank down into another chair and laughed until the tears ran down her face. Eva soon joined in the laugh herself.

"How I can ever look at him again I don't know," she said as they descended to the parlors again.

They found George, now a tall, handsome young man, with a fine, black mustache and curly locks, shaking hands with everybody, and introducing his friend, Hugh McFarlane.

"Eva—Eva—sister!" exclaimed George, rushing forward and taking her in his arms. "Give me some of those kisses you gave to—"

"Hush—sh, George!" cried Eva, in alarm, trying to stop his mouth.

"Oh, everybody knows it!" laughed George, covering her blushing face with kisses. "Why, how beautiful and sweet you have grown!"

"And you—you are a great big man, now!" she returned, justly proud of her handsome brother.

"Oh, yes; I am the Khan of Tartary, now, and here is the Grand Turk of all the little turkeys—Hugh McFarlane—my classmate!"

A roar burst from those around at this novel introduction, as Hugh bowed and extended his hand, saying:

"We can afford to forgive him, Miss Morton, can we not?"

"I suppose so," faltered Eva, blushing like a rose; "but he's awful wicked!"

"I cannot bear witness against him," said Hugh, shaking his head, "or I could a tale unfold that would—"

"I say, you old gourmand!" cried George, interrupting him. "You want to finish that little turkey you began on, eh?"

"Say duck, rather," suggested Hugh, bowing with gracefulness toward George, at which Eva blushed again and the other laughed.

"You are both incorrigibly wicked!" she said, turning to her brother and introducing him to Irene.

At the mention of her name George started. He had been wondering who the superb beauty could be, thinking her the most lovely young lady he had ever seen.

"What!" he exclaimed, seizing Irene's hands in both his. "It surely can't be possible that you are the little friend I left behind me four years ago?"

"I believe I am the same person," said Irene laughingly, enjoying his surprise.

"What a magnificent rose the bud has become!"

"Miss Hicks, Mr. Farlane," said Eva, introducing Hugh McFarlane to her friend, thus cutting short the fulsome compliments George was about to shower upon Irene.

In the course of the evening George had shaken hands and received the congratulations of everybody in the house. He led Irene out on the floor and opened the dance with her, McFarlane joining with Eva.

Everybody was happy, but the happiest of all was Irene Hicks, for she saw that George Morton, captivated by her charms, was her willing slave.

The announcement of supper came in the midst of the dance. Irene was led downstairs by George, Eva following, leaning on the arm of Hugh.

It was a splendid banquet; for Judge Morton was rich, a generous liver, fond of entertaining his friends, and, withal, a man of the world. Champagne flowed like water, and the toasts went around the tables in a ceaseless stream of rich humor.

George and Hugh were perfectly at home in such a place and her son's jollity of spirits and immense capacity of wine-drinking astonished Mrs. Morton.

The spirit of mischief prompted Hugh to call on George for a song, and the suggestion caused a storm of applause.

George sang "Rory O'Moore" with such exquisite effect that screams of laughter followed, and even the judge, his father, laughed till he shook like a bowl of jelly, and George's reputation as a jolly fellow went up above par at once.

The banquet over, they all went back upstairs and resumed dancing, which was kept up till the "wee sma' hours ayant the twal," after which the guests retired and quiet once more reigned in the stately mansion.

The family met at the breakfast table the next morning and discussed the incidents of the reception. Irene, who had spent the night with Eva, added interest to the conversation, for George was desirous of making an impression on her.

But it was among the young men of Overton that George had made the greatest impression. They saw at a glance that he was a jolly good fellow, ready for a joke, a drink, a racket, or anything else that promised fun for them. Hence, when he and Hugh McFarlane strolled out about town the next day, they were taken possession of at once, carried to the Overton House, where a half dozen friends sat down to discuss Piper Heidsieck with them. The result was that both went back to the Morton mansion almost "too full for utterance."

Under pretense of entertaining Hugh and having a high old racket, George invited a dozen friends to a champagne supper at the Overton House. Every man was on hand—the supper being served in a private parlor of the hotel. They drank, sang and otherwise enjoyed themselves until, overheated by the wine they had drunk, they sallied out for fresh air and such adventures as the village afforded. The hour was late, and all the good people of Overton were asleep.

"I say, fellows," said George, "let's change the order of business in this burgh."

"That's the programme!" cried Hugh; "new constitution, by-laws and order of business."

"But how?" asked one of the party, who little dreamed of the devilry that emanates from Yale.

"Take down all the signs and change them," answered George.

"Down with 'em!" cried several, and the work began.

There was no police in the village, and they had full play. Signs were taken down and others put up in their stead, until a stranger would have been troubled to find just what he wanted the next day. The corner grocery sign was over Deacon Jones' store, the millinery over the shoemaker's; the drug-store sign and pestle did duty for the barber, and the barber's pole stood sentinel before a well-known lawyer's office, while a whitewasher's sign ornamented the front door of a Methodist church.

On coming to the only Jew store in the village, they found that the sign could not be taken down without the aid of a ladder. One of the party ran off and soon returned with the whitewasher's ladder, which he placed cautiously against the door. George, the ringleader in the racket, nimbly ran up the ladder and proceeded to remove the sign-board from its fastenings, but made so much noise in doing so that old Simon Hoechstetter, the Jew, was awakened.

Thinking burglars were trying to break in, he sprang out of bed, seized a horse-pistol that had done service in the Mexican war and rushed for the door. There he waited and listened with bated breath until he could stand it no longer.

Believing that were he to suddenly open the door, fire the pistol and yell murder, the villains would take to their heels in terror, he hastily turned the key in the lock, the door flew wide open, and the ladder, with George on it, came down like a thunderbolt on top of him.

Bang! went the old horse-pistol with a report like a musket.

"Murter—murter!" roared old Simon with all his might; "I ish killed all ofer! Murter—t'ieves—t'ieves!" and scrambling to his feet, with his head between the rounds of the

ladder, he ran out into the middle of the street, dragging the ladder with him.

Fearing the consequences, the party fled, leaving only Hugh McFarlane to rescue George, who was entangled in the ladder that the terror-stricken old Jew was dragging about the street.

"Drop that, in the name of father Abraham!" cried Hugh, rushing after Simon.

"Knock him on the head!" yelled George, trying to free himself from the ladder.

"Murter—t'ieves!" roared old Simon, loud enough to wake up the dead.

"There's something to yell about!" exclaimed Hugh, giving the Jew a blow on the ear that sent him to grass. He then assisted George to extricate himself, when they took to their heels, leaving old Simon to alarm half the town with his cries.

CHAPTER III.

SIGNING THE PLEDGE—FATHER AND SON.

George and Hugh were as amiable as lambs the next morning, nothing in their manner indicating the uproarious racket they had engaged in the night before. Eva and Irene believed them to be most exemplary young men, whose accomplishments were of a high order. George was very attentive to Irene, and Hugh paid his devotions to Eva, all four spending the entire afternoon in the parlor, singing duets and talking love. George had become so infatuated with Irene that he had induced her to walk out onto the lawn with him, where, seated in a summer-house, he declared his love, proposed, and was accepted by the happy maiden.

Judge Morton returned home at noon, greatly scandalized by the midnight racket George had precipitated on the town, condemning it in the strongest terms. Said he:

"Old Simon has sworn out warrants for the arrest of the guilty parties, and will place them in the hands of the detective, and it is hoped that he will succeed in catching them."

"Does he know who the parties are?" George asked.

"No, but he has employed a detective," replied the judge, "and it's only a question of time as to their arrest."

"Well, that kind of business ought not to be permitted in Overton," remarked George, giving a wise look at Hugh.

"Why, I thought Overton was a very quiet place," observed Hugh, turning to Eva.

"It always has been heretofore," said Eva, defending her native place.

In the afternoon the two friends excused themselves to the ladies and strolled off into the business part of the village, where they hunted up the parties who were with them the night before, told them to keep dark, and they would send the detective about his business.

They next hunted up the detective, who was about as much qualified for success in his line of business as a mule is to teach music. Inviting him to drink with them at the Overton House, they obtained his confidence and ascertained that old Simon had promised him fifty dollars if he could arrest the perpetrators of the outrage, with proof to convict, and nothing if he failed.

"I'll give you fifty cash down if you fail to find out anything about it," said George, drawing out his pocketbook.

"It's a bargain," said the detective, holding out his itching palm for the money.

George paid him the money, and thus escaped, as thousands do every year in the great cities of the country.

It is needless to say that the detective never found out who played the racket on old Simon, the Jew.

But every evening, when not dancing attendance on Irene, George was off with Hugh hunting up some kind of excitement by which to break the dull monotony of village life.

Mrs. Hicks—Irene's mother—concluded to give an entertainment similar to the one given by Judge Morton. Of course, George and Hugh attended, the latter escorting Eva, George going alone. Wine flowed freely, and George drank freely—too freely, in fact, and Hugh was under the necessity of taking him away.

This caused no little excitement among the old people, but the gay and thoughtless laughed over the circumstance as something amusing. But both Irene and Eva felt it deeply. Still they dreaded no danger, and it was soon for-

gotten, until an accident occurred that aroused all their solicitude for his future.

Originally intending to stop but a week with George, Hugh McFarlane found himself lingering a month by the side of his sister Eva. He could not tear himself away, but at the last imperative orders from his father forced him to give notice that on the day following he would leave Overton for his distant home. He spent the remainder of his stay by Eva's side, to whom he declared his love, and was accepted.

When he was gone Overton was a blank to George Morton. He sought to kill time with wine, cards and billiards at the Overton House, often coming home very late and the worse for liquor. His mother one day discovered a well-worn pack of cards in his coat-pocket, on which his father delivered him a lecture.

A few evenings later he met a convivial party at the hotel and engaged in a game of cards with them. They were all more or less under the influence of the champagne they had been drinking.

"It's my deal!" said one of the party as George took up the cards.

"You are mistaken—it's mine," said George.

"You lie, George Morton, and——"

George dealt him a stinging blow on the mouth, and a general free fight ensued. George, being a skilled boxer, kept his assailants at bay, giving black eyes right and left, until he was knocked senseless with a chair.

He was taken upstairs and put to bed, his wound dressed, and kept there all night.

Mrs. Morton was shocked when he came home with his head bandaged, and his father gave him another severe lecture. The fight became the talk of the town, and everybody heard of it. It had the effect to keep him from drinking for nearly two weeks, by which time the ugly lump raised on his head by the chair had disappeared.

He called on Irene.

"George," she asked, after she had listened some time to his words of love, "do you really love me?"

"Better than my own soul, darling. Why do you ask?"

"Because my soul is full of fear and doubt, George," she replied.

"What! You doubt my love, Irene—my constancy!" he exclaimed, in amazement. "Ask me what you will—try me, prove me, and see whether I am found wanting!"

"Will you let me test your love for me?"

"Yes, darling, a thousand times, yes!"

"Sign the pledge, then, and keep it!" said she, with a depth of feeling that startled him.

He looked at her a moment in dumbfounded amazement.

"Is that the test you would apply to my love, Irene?" he asked.

"Yes, George—is it too hard?"

"No; but—but——"

"But what?"

"I thought you would ask me to do something grand—heroic."

"If you only knew how many brave men had signed the pledge, and yet fell, you would esteem yourself a hero to keep it."

"Is it necessary that I should do so?"

"Yes, George—necessary to my happiness that you sign and keep the pledge inviolate."

"I will do it—for your sake, darling," he said, and Irene threw her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"You dear, good fellow, I knew you would!" she said, happy beyond words to express. "We'll go to the lodge to-morrow night, and——"

"What! Join a lodge?"

"Why, of course!" said she, laughing and kissing him again and again. "Don't you say another word and we'll have a delightful time."

"But I didn't know you were a member, and I didn't promise to do anything but sign the pledge!" protested George, but he was weak, yielding to the lovely girl in everything she wished.

The next evening he accompanied Irene to the lodge, was initiated, signed the pledge, and was welcomed with great enthusiasm by all the members.

Irene was supremely happy now, and congratulated herself on what she had done.

But George went home with a very serious look on his face. He began already to regret the step he had taken.

"Hang this infernal temperance business!" he exclaimed,

as he left Irene at her own door. "How in thunder am I to get out of drinking with the fellows when they ask me? I've put my foot in it, and I wish the lodge at the bottom of the ocean before I ever heard of it!"

"I say, George!" called one of his boon companions the next day, as he strolled up the street, "come, take a glass with us!"

"Excuse me!" stammered George; "I—I——"

"Excuse the deuce!" said his friend, taking him by the arm. "I understand the case exactly. You joined the lodge last night, I heard, but that don't make any difference—take a little on the sly—they all do it."

"Is that so?"

"Yes; I've been a member myself."

"Well, I didn't know that," said George, hesitatingly.

"Of course not; come on, we'll take something in the back room, on the sly."

George looked up and down the street a moment, and then went in with the two young men, passing into a rear room for privacy, where they called for and drank a bottle of wine.

"What will Irene say?" was a question which came up in his mind a dozen times as he sat there drinking, and each time he would dispose of it by saying to himself: "She need not know it."

Thus it went on two or three weeks, and to all appearances George was keeping the pledge. But the reality was he was drinking deeper and deeper every night, save when he went to the lodge with Irene.

One evening he was in a private room at the Overton House, drinking still deeper, until at last he was on the verge of losing control of himself. The party broke up and George reeled homeward. The cool night air and the walk braced him up considerably.

On reaching home he saw a light in the library, through which he had to go to reach his room, having a night-key only for that part of the house. He opened the door and entered the library, finding himself face to face with his father.

"George," said Judge Morton sternly, "what does this mean?"

"Wh-what's the matter now, guv'ner?" he asked, in a reckless tone.

"Matter—matter!" exclaimed Judge Morton angrily. "You are drunk, sir!"

"Guess not," said George, bracing up and looking his parent in the eye.

"You joined the lodge, signed the pledge, and have been drinking ever since, which is a lower thing than I ever dreamed a Morton would stoop to do."

George reddened under the rebuke, and was about to reply when Judge Morton pointed to a champagne bottle on the table, and said:

"Your mother found that bottle in your trunk to-day, sir, an evidence of your sottishness in drinking in secret!"

"No, sir!" thundered George. "I brought that bottle from Yale College to keep as a memento of our last meeting."

"Memento of your last drink, more likely," sneered his irate father. "This thing must stop right here, sir, I will have no more of it. Do you understand me, sir?"

"Yes, and don't care a——"

"To me, sir—to me are you talking, young ungrateful——"

Judge Morton had seized him by the collar and shook him, and George, maddened by the wine he had drunk, snatched the bottle up and dealt his father a stunning blow on the head, breaking the bottle and felling the judge to the floor.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TERRORS OF CONSCIENCE.

As his father fell senseless to the floor, George Morton stood over him, petrified with horror. He gazed down at the broken bottle, the still, motionless form and bleeding wound of his father and shuddered.

"My heavens!" he gasped, sobered in a moment. "What have I done? Have I murdered my own father?"

He stooped and examined the wound.

"No, no!" he cried, "it cannot be! He is not dead!"

Judge Morton groaned.

"Thank heavens!" ejaculated George, moving toward the

door. "He is only stunned, but I can never face him again—he will never forgive me for that blow."

Judge Morton groaned again, moved, and finally sat up on the floor, gazing around the room in a dazed sort of way as if trying to collect where he was and what the matter was.

George had moved himself out into the corridor so as to be out of sight of his father.

"And this is the end of all my pains and expense with my only boy!" said Judge Morton, rising and looking around the room. "To be insulted, knocked on the head and left for dead. He has fled—the doors of my heart and house are forever closed against him. Oh, sharper than a serpent's tooth is a thankless child! Blood—my blood shed by my only son. Heavens, this is hard to bear!" and the father burst into tears and wept, great convulsive sobs shaking him as they broke from him.

But he soon regained his composure, and looking about the room, saw the fragments of the broken bottle lying on the floor.

"The bottle is the cause of all," he muttered, stooping and picking up the pieces. "I will save these and put them together again as my witness against any legacy to him who raised his hand against his father."

Placing the pieces of broken glass on the table, Judge Morton turned down the gas and left the library, going to the bathroom to wash off the blood.

"And this is the end," said George, stepping back into the library and sinking down into a chair. "Disowned by my father, and cut off without a penny in the world, with the prospect of falling heir to a broken bottle. Cursed be the day I ever touched a glass of wine! I would go down on my knees to him if it would atone for what I have done, but I would be scorned—spurned, and driven out with his curse resting on my head! Oh, Irene, I have lost you, too—my heart's idol! Home—father—mother—love and friends—all gone!"

In the deep anguish of his soul, George Morton would have gone down on his knees in penitence before his father, but he well knew the stern inflexibility of his disposition, and hence refrained from going to him.

"But I will not go a beggar!" he hissed, springing up and relighting the gas. "I know where the key to that safe is. He will never let the world know that his own son struck or robbed him. Family pride will save me there, but it will make it harder to bear. Great heavens! if I only had the courage to kill myself!"

Going softly into another room he approached the drawer in which the key to the iron safe was kept, opened it, and took out the key. Returning, he opened the safe and took therefrom several thousand dollars in bonds and money. These he hastily stowed away in his pockets, relocked the safe and put the key back where he found it. Then, approaching the table he took up a piece of broken bottle, put it into his pocket, glanced around the room as if loath to leave it, and then passed out into the night, with a terrible future before him.

It was now nearly midnight.

He turned and looked back at the aristocratic mansion in which he was born—at the lawn, where he and his sister, the gentle Eva, had sported together in happy childhood days, and breathed a deep sigh.

"Lost—lost!" he muttered. "I've lost it all! Oh, Irene, my lost darling, had I but kept my pledge this would not have been!"

He turned away, going toward the railroad station, designing to catch the one o'clock express train for New York.

When halfway there he suddenly paused, looked way to the right, as if he fain would pierce the thick foliage of the groves of trees that stood between him and Mrs. Hicks' residence. Then, moved by an irresistible impulse, he sprang forward and ran through the grove, never stopping until he stood in front of the gate of the Hicks' mansion.

He gazed up into the window of the room in which his heart's idol lay dreaming—dreaming of him, perhaps, and of his grand, glorious future, honored and respected, as his father was among men.

"Irene," he murmured, leaning against the gate, "I am fallen low, and am unworthy of your love. Had I listened to you, my angel, and kept the pledge, this would not have been. But I will rise again and come back a man—refund every dollar to my father and command your love and his forgiveness. I swear it, Irene, by thy dear self—thy dear heart, never to touch wine again!"

Giving a last, lingering look up at her window, he turned away—suddenly wheeled, ran back again, imprinted a passionate kiss on the gate-latch, and then fled—running wildly toward the station.

A few minutes after reaching the station the great iron horse came thundering along, stopped a moment for two or three people to get on and off, and then, with a shrill scream, darted off like a huge, winged serpent for the metropolis of the nation.

Judge Morton was a man of extraordinary decision of character. He resolved to keep the encounter a profound secret from his family and the world, and to prevent any unpleasant suspicions arising in the minds of his wife and daughter, he bathed his head until the scalp wound ceased to bleed. He then retired. The next morning he arose, carefully brushed his hair in a manner to conceal the uncomfortable bump the bottle had raised, and went down into the library, as was his usual wont, and read the morning papers till breakfast was announced.

The absence of George created no uneasiness in the family, for he had often absented himself for two or three days at a time.

Judge Morton told his wife that the bottle she found in George's trunk had struck against something and been broken.

"I only wish it had been broken before George ever saw it," sighed the mother.

"Well, it's broken now," said the judge, "and can't be helped."

"It's of no consequence whatever," she remarked.

Alas! she never dreamed of the consequences of that broken bottle.

Judge Morton returned to the library, where he took mucilage and undertook to reconstruct the broken bottle. He soon gave it up, put on his hat, and went downtown, where he purchased a small bottle of cement, with which he leisurely retraced his footsteps. He set himself again to the task of reconstructing that ominous bottle, putting the pieces together carefully, slowly, until at last the bottle was made whole again, with the exception of a peculiar-shaped piece in the side. That piece he could not find on the table. He hunted in every nook and corner of the room for it, still he could not lay hands on it.

"I am quite sure I gathered up every piece," he muttered, looking quite nonplused at his failure to find it.

He then ordered a servant to carefully sweep the room, preserving any piece of the broken bottle that might be found. But nothing was found, and the judge locked the bottle inside the glass casing of the library shelves and walked out into the town to give himself some relief from the terrible strain on head and heart to which he had been subjected.

CHAPTER V.

BREAKS THE PLEDGE.

Ill at ease, racked with remorse and bitterly cursing his fate, George Morton leaned back in the cushioned car seat and gave way to a gloomy train of thought. Every revolution of the swift-revolving wheels carried him farther and farther away from all he held dear on earth. In those hours of thoughtful awakening he made resolves of reformation that, had they been made earlier and adhered to, would have placed him where the loving confidence of Irene Hicks had already assigned him—in the front rank of exemplary young men of Overton.

"But it is not too late," he muttered to himself. "I will drink no more—will go into business, make a fortune and a name my father will be proud of, marry Irene, and trust to time to soften his heart. I'll attend the regular meetings of the lodge and turn temperance lec——"

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" exclaimed a well-known voice by his side, and looking up he saw the face of Peter McDermott, his classmate.

"Yes," continued Peter, "my eyes do not deceive me—it's George Morton, the prince of jolly good fellows! Give us a shake, old fellow!" and grasping his hand in his, Peter gave him a hearty shake before he uttered a word in return.

"Peter McDermott!" exclaimed George, returning the pressure of the hand.

"That's my cognomen," said Peter, laughing and dropping

into the seat by his side. "How goes the world with you, royal highness?"

"Badly," replied George. "I am going to New York to see if I cannot induce it to give me a fortune."

"By my halidome, but fate is propitious!" exclaimed Peter, striking an attitude. "I am going on the same errand, and together we will make the welkin ring with——"

"No, no! no more welkin ringing for me, Peter," said George, shaking his head, as the remembrance of his terrible condition flashed over him.

Peter looked at him in astonishment.

"I've sworn off, Peter," said George, "and won't drink another drop of wine."

"The deuce! Take brandy, then."

"No!" firmly.

"Oh, I beg pardon; perhaps you are going to study for the ministry?" Peter remarked.

"No," replied George; "I am going to quit drinking on the general principle that it doesn't pay to drink."

"Oh!" and Peter was a picture to look at so full of comical doubt did his face appear at that moment. He tried hard to appear serious, but in vain. He burst out in a roar of laughter that woke up every sleeper in the car. It was a hearty, healthy laugh, such as would bubble up from a heart free from care or responsibility, and so contagious was it that George himself soon joined in it, as did others in the car, out of pure sympathy.

"Laugh as much as you please, Peter," said George, when the laugh subsided, "but I won't drink another drop."

"I say, George, what have you done with your bottle you carried home with you from Yale?"

George turned white as a sheet and hissed out:

"I've broken it to pieces, and I wish every bottle in the world were served the same way!"

Peter whistled his astonishment, without looking at the pallid face of his companion.

"I have mine in my trunk, and will fill it with the best wine in New York, not to be opened till we have a reunion of our class," he said. "But where are you going to stop in New York?"

"At the Astor House. Where are you going?"

"I have an uncle living up on Fifth avenue. I will go up there."

"Then you are fixed for enjoying yourself?"

"Oh, yes; and uncle has gotten a bang-up position for me somewhere down on Wall Street. I really don't know whether I will turn out a bear or a bull yet."

"You're in luck. I am going for the purpose of getting into some kind of a position that will give me a chance to rise in the world."

"I'll make Uncle Toby get you a place," said Peter, with generous enthusiasm.

Thus the two friends talked as the train bore them onward toward the great city, which they reached about noon the next day.

"Hello, Ed!" cried Peter, grasping the hand of a stylish-looking young man just as he stepped from the cars in Jersey City. "Glad to see you, by Jove! This is my classmate and friend, George Morton—my cousin, Ed Van Wyck, George."

George and young Van Wyck shook hands cordially.

"Best fellow in the class, Ed," said Peter, by way of endorsement of Morton. "Never fails to hold up his end of the line, and can sing a song, crack a joke, and make a speech equal to the best of them."

"That's what I call a gilt-edged endorsement!" said Ed, laughing good naturedly.

"It's an out-and-out forgery," protested George, as all three joined in a hearty laugh.

"Come, give me your baggage checks," said young Van Wyck, "and I'll have an expressman going up ahead of us with your trunks."

Peter handed him his trunk check; but George, having no trunk with him, not wishing the fact known, promptly remarked:

"My trunk was expressed to the Astor House from Overton yesterday."

"Then we'll drive by there and have it sent up to——"

"Excuse me, but an appointment with a friend renders it imperative that I should stop there at least one week," replied George.

"I am sorry to hear that," said Ed, "for I would prefer to have you come with us."

"Many thanks for your kindness, sir, but I must keep my appointment with my friend."

"Of course—of course—but get in with us and we'll drop you at the hotel and then call and see you in the evening."

He entered the carriage and was driven to the hotel, where they left him. He registered as "George Morton, Overton," paid a week's board in advance, ate a hearty dinner and then went out among the merchant tailoring establishments, where he purchased a trunk full of fashionable clothing, which he ordered sent to the hotel immediately. On returning to his room quite late in the afternoon, he found the trunk there, together with many other minor articles of convenience he had ordered sent up.

"Now I feel solid," he said to himself as he put on a splendid dress-suit and admired his handsome figure in the large mirror. "It isn't just the thing to be without baggage in a place like this."

Descending to the large parlor of the hotel he found several ladies and gentlemen around the piano, listening to the performance of a beautiful young lady on the instrument. He stood near the instrument and listened, until the memory of the many pleasant hours he had spent with Irene Hicks, by the piano, made him utterly miserable.

"Oh, if he could only forget!"

"Can any of you gentlemen sing 'The Heart Bowed Down'?" asked the young lady, looking up at an acquaintance as she arranged the music of that exquisite song before her.

They all protested that they could not.

"Will you accept the services of a stranger?" George asked with a respectful bow to the young lady.

"With pleasure, sir," she replied, taking him in at a glance.

He sang it with such pathos, such skill and melody, that all were charmed—delighted. Song after song followed, and his rich baritone voice set all the ladies in a flutter. They suspected him of being some eminent professional singer.

True to their promise, Peter McDermott and Ed Van Wyck called at the hotel that evening and carried him off to the opera, where the Van Wycks had a private box for the season. There he met the Misses Van Wyck—two charming young ladies—who at once appropriated him.

After the opera they all repaired to a celebrated Broadway restaurant for ices and other refreshments.

Champagne was ordered.

George turned pale, and was about to decline to drink when one of the young ladies filled her glass and said:

"Mr. Morton, you must pledge me in a glass of this wine."

He filled his glass and drank it off, his good resolutions to drink no more being blown to the winds. He drank deeply, his spirits rising in proportion to the quantity he put down, sparkling wit and repartee falling from his lips like gems of wisdom from King Solomon's brain.

CHAPTER VI.

AT JEROME PARK—NIL DESPERANDUM.

Through the Van Wycks our young hero was introduced into the best society of the metropolis, where he became a general favorite. It was well known that his father was wealthy—a judge and ex-member of Congress, and himself a graduate of Yale College. He was everywhere received with great cordiality, particularly by managing mammas with marriageable daughters.

But he had no heart to give. Irene was still a sacred memory with him.

But with the young men it was different. Among them he was a jolly fellow, reckless of expenses, and ever ready to plunge into excesses.

Through the influence of old Toby Van Wyck—Ed's father—he obtained the position of assistant cashier in a large bank downtown. During the first month he applied himself diligently to learn the duties of his position, succeeding so finely as to win the confidence of all the officers and directors. Still, during that time he drank deeply every night, of which none but his associates were cognizant. Many a night he spent considerably over one hundred dollars among his friends; but, as his father was known to be very rich, nothing was thought of it at the time.

About two months after entering the service of the bank

he was promoted to be cashier, the former one having suddenly suicided. With this came an increase of responsibility and salary.

But his funds began to run low.

His liberal salary would not suffice for his reckless extravagance, to say nothing of his legitimate expenses.

"Fool that I am!" he bitterly remarked one day. "Why can I not keep the pledge, save my money, grow rich, marry Irene, and thus compel my father to forgive all? Great Jupiter, what a fool I have been!"

These bitter reflections made him miserable, and that evening he met a number of young brokers and sports, drank deeply and was more reckless than ever.

"I say, Morton," said a well-known sporting man to him as they quaffed their wine, "are you going up to the Jerome Park races next week?"

"I don't know," he replied. "I would like to go, but don't know that I can get away from the bank. Is there a chance to make anything up there?"

"Yes; and a chance that seldom offers," replied the sportsman.

"How is that?" George asked, manifesting unusual interest.

"A horse is coming from the West which has beaten everything brought against him during the last three years, and made the fastest time on record. I am going to put up my last dollar on him and borrow as far as my credit will go."

"You feel quite sure about it, then?"

"Yes. A friend of mine won twenty thousand on him last spring in St. Louis."

"What's his name?"

"My friend?"

"No, the horse."

"Ah! that's my secret. You see, it won't do to blow about him too much till he appears on the ground, as I am going to get all the odds I can."

"You might let me into the secret," said George persuasively.

"Percentage?"

"Yes—how much?"

"Ten per cent. of the winnings."

"I'll do it."

"Agreed!" and they shook hands over the bargain, sealing it with a glass of wine.

"That's a chance for me," muttered George to himself an hour later, as he retired to his hotel. "If I could win twenty or thirty thousand, I could send back to father what I took from his safe and have enough to form the nucleus of a fortune. Yes, by Jove, I'll do it!"

The Saturday before the races was a busy day at the banks, and George worked with great earnestness. Just as the bank closed he asked of the president:

"Can you give me two days off next week—Tuesday and Wednesday?"

"Impossible, my dear sir," replied the president. "Two clerks are ill—short of hands, you know."

George turned away, bitterly cursing the circumstances.

"Hang it all, I'll go anyhow!" he muttered. "My funds are exhausted, and I can't stop now with an empty pocket. I can afford to reform with a full purse, and will do it."

When he left the bank on Monday evening his books were skillfully balanced to cover a deficiency of twenty thousand dollars, which he carried away with him.

The assistant cashier passed out with him.

"I am about half sick, Charlie," he said to him as they were passing a drug-store, "and must get a prescription or I'll be laid up with a fever."

He entered the drug-store and purchased a bottle of medicine, and continued on up the street with his companion.

The next morning the president of the bank received a despatch from the cashier, as follows:

"I am too ill to come down this morning.

"(Signed) George Morton."

The assistant cashier was notified to act as cashier until George came down. Charlie remarked to the president that George was feeling unwell the day before.

Being on the sick list for the day, George hastened to get off to Jerome Park with Peter McDermott, Ed Van Wyck and a number of other boon companions.

Jerome Park that day was a picture for an artist. Thou-

sands of fair women and gallant men were there, and the green sward, the gaily decorated stands, clubhouse and other buildings presented an animated scene seldom witnessed.

George met many lady acquaintances there, and champagne flowed freely. Everybody was in the best of spirits and confident that his horse would win the stakes.

"Have you seen the great racer from the West?" Ed Van Wyck asked.

"No; where is he?"

"Come with me and I'll show him to you. They say he never lost a race, and has made the best time on record."

"What is his name?"

"Meteor, I believe."

They soon reached the spot where the famous racer was kept.

"By Jove! isn't he a beauty?" exclaimed George, carried away with admiration of the wonderful racer. "I never saw such splendid limbs on a horse!"

"I am going to back him," said Ed.

"So am I."

"Let's go and have some champagne with the fellows, and take all the odds we can get."

"Good; come on!"

They repaired to the refreshment rooms of the clubhouse, and drank deeply with a number of young men and old turfmen.

"To the grandstand, boys!" cried some one. "The race is about to open!"

There was a rush, and George became separated from his party. But he managed to make his way to a prominent position, where he could see the whole course, opposite the judge's stand.

The races opened with several unknown horses, yet the excitement ran high. Everybody seemed possessed with a desire to wager something.

"A box of gloves on the iron-gray, Mr. Morton!" cried a vivacious young lady in the crowd on his left.

"With pleasure!"

And pulling out his book, he recorded the wager.

"Fifty to one hundred on the bay gelding!" cried a man just in front.

A dozen took him up at once.

The horses started.

The jockeys in their tight-fitting suits seemed part of the splendid steeds they bestrode, catching the spirit of the immense throng which seemed to hold its breath in suspense as the horses neared the goal. Then came cries of odds on the iron-gray as he careered ahead a whole length.

"You owe me a box of gloves, Mr. Morton!" cried the delighted young lady who had bantered him into a wager.

"The race is not ended yet—look, there—the bay gelding wins! Ha! ha! ha!"

To the infinite surprise of the young lady the bay gelding shot ahead on the homestretch and won by half a length.

"By Jove!" muttered George to himself, "I won a box of gloves, and it might as well have been ten thousand dollars! I will go deeper next time."

He rushed off to drink wine with a party of acquaintances.

"Now for the great race of the day!" cried a sportsman, as the famous Meteor and other equally famous horses were led out before the judge's stand.

"Oh, what beauties!"

"Such splendid limbs!"

"Two to one on Meteor!"

"An even thousand on Shooting Star!"

The jockeys mount.

The splendid animals paw the ground and prance about as if they knew they were the connoisseurs of all eyes in that vast throng of eager, excited men and women.

The signal is given, and away they go like the wind!

"Five thousand on Meteor!" cried George excitedly.

"I see you, sir," said a sportsman near by. "Your name?"

"George Morton—and yours?"

"Joe Hilton."

"Five thousand on Shooting Star!" cried another.

"One thousand on Meteor!"

"A pair of gloves on Shooting Star!"

"Oh, just look! Don't they go beautifully!"

"Shooting Star is losing ground—Meteor is a neck ahead!"

"Five thousand on Meteor!" cried George again, in a blaze of enthusiasm.

"Taken!" cried a man on his left.

Meteor kept gaining ground, until he was a full length ahead of Shooting Star. They neared the grandstand in

their first round, every soul on tiptoe to see them as they whizzed past.

"Ten cents on the head horse!" cried a boy up in a tree near by, at which a roar went up from the crowd.

"Five dollars on the winning horse!" cried another.

George kept crying out wagers so lustily, and was taken up so quickly, that he knew not how much he had staked. Rings, fans and gloves he had wagered with the fair beauties around him, until, in his terrible excitement, he forgot to record them. The horses were now coming in on the homestretch; the vast throng arose on tiptoes.

"Look—look! Shooting Star is coming up with him! There—they are even now—neck and neck! Hurrah—hurrah! Meteor is ahead now—no, Shooting Star. Egad! he'll win the race! He wins—he wins! Hurrah—hurrah! for Shooting Star!"

White as a ghost, and glaring like a madman, George sprang from the balcony of the grandstand and darted toward Meteor as Shooting Star passed the goal.

"You infernal imp!" he hissed, as he grasped the reins with one hand and clutched the jockey with the other. "You sold us out—sold the race!"

CHAPTER VII.

REMORSE AND REFORMATION.

The wildest excitement followed George Morton's attack on the jockey. His frenzied exclamation that the jockey had sold out to the other side was taken up by those who staked and lost on Meteor, and in another minute the jockey's life was in imminent danger from his infuriated backers.

"Kill him—pull him apart—the little wretch!" cried a score of voices, as George hurled him from the saddle, sending him rolling in the dust, while others gave him kicks and cuffs that induced him to fly for his life.

In the confusion that followed, George, inflamed by the liquor he had drunk and maddened by his losses, sprang into the saddle, and, waving his hands wildly above his head, cried out:

"This horse was never beaten in his life—he can't be beaten in a fair race. That blasted jockey sold us out—"

"Get down!"

"Dry up!"

"Knock him off!"

"Pay up like a man!"

"Put him out!" and a hundred other similar expressions assailed him.

"I'll ride him myself," he yelled back, "against Shooting Star for fifty thousand dollars—now put up or shut up!"

"Put that fool out of the way!" cried one of the judges, and the next moment George found himself a prisoner in the hands of half a dozen of the park police, who marched him off toward the clubhouse, followed by a great crowd, demanding his release. Finally it was decided to let him go, at the solicitation of several influential members of the club. He agreed with the conditions, and was released.

But the moment he was free he was besieged by those with whom he had wagered, demanding his check for the amount they had won.

Bitterly cursing ill-fortune, he paid out all of the twenty thousand dollars he had brought with him, except a few hundreds, and found that he still owed several thousand more. To these he gave his acceptances at thirty days, and then left the park.

"Fool—fool!" he muttered bitterly, as he wended his way to the station. "Always a fool—worse than a fool—an idiot. I am ruined, and hadn't the good sense to stop when I could have done so with honor and credit. Oh, Irene, had I but listened to you, my best and truest friend. I would not have been the ruined, despicable creature I am to-day!"

He reached his hotel, wearied and so sick at heart that he went to bed immediately. The dread of his crime in robbing the bank nearly crazed him.

He grew quite feverish and restless.

Late in the afternoon the assistant cashier called.

"Hello, old boy!" said young Osborn, on entering the room. "Ain't bad off, are you?"

"No, I think not; but still I am far from feeling well. How goes things down at the bank?"

"Oh, everything goes on smoothly," replied Charlie. "The president was a little out of humor when he received your despatch, but soon got over it. He told me to call and see how you were as soon as the bank closed."

George inwardly congratulated himself on his good fortune to be found in bed when young Osborn came. He also felt safe about the defalcation, as he knew Osborn would tell him if anything had been discovered.

"Please open that bottle of medicine," he asked, pointing to the bottle he had purchased the day before, which stood on a table near the bed.

Charlie opened the bottle, poured out the contents into a large glass and handed it to him. He drank it down and laid back on the bed as though very ill.

"Shall I send for a doctor?"

"No—I will be better by morning," he replied.

Charlie soon took his leave of him and went away, fully impressed with the idea that George was quite ill.

The next morning George put in his appearance at the bank, looking quite pale. The officers of the bank were very sympathetic in their expressions of regard, the president telling him to take several days of rest before entering on his duties again. But he dared not. He dreaded the discovery of his crime, and felt safer by being at his post than away from it.

"Now, I won't drink another drop of liquor," he said to himself, as he resumed his place at the cashier's desk. "If I keep sober, watch my chances, I can replace that money. There'll be plenty of chances before it can be found out."

That evening he went out to a lecture, purposely to avoid meeting any of his friends, who, he well knew, would insist on his drinking with them.

The next evening he concluded to reform in good earnest.

"If I do not," he reasoned to himself, "I will never get out of the scrape I am in. They will find me out sooner or later, and then, oh, heavens! Irene and my poor mother and sister would die of grief and shame. I must—I will do it! I'll go to a lodge meeting to-night if there is one in New York City!"

In an earnest spirit of repentance he sought out the place of meeting of one of the many lodges in the city, dressed himself faultlessly and applied at the door of the ante-room. He had the password of that quarter, having joined in Overton at the beginning of the term, and therefore found little trouble in gaining admission to the lodge room.

He was a total stranger there—no one knowing him—but was soon made to feel that he was in an element that he had never known before. Men and women came to him, took his hand, asked his name, welcomed him to their lodge and evinced a deep interest in the great cause of humanity. He noticed that many were men who had been scorched by the fire of intemperance, but they were now happy and well-to-do.

On being called on he made an earnest little speech that made a very favorable impression on every one present. Officers and members invited him to visit them again, and he went away feeling better and stronger for having gone there.

On returning to his hotel he was surprised to find Ed Van Wyck and Peter McDermott waiting for him.

"Where in the name of all that's sacred and holy have you been, George Morton?" cried Peter, on seeing him. "We hunted all over town for you last night."

"I attended a lecture last night," said George, a little confused.

"And another one to-night, eh?" added Peter. "Well, I should say you ought to be lectured every night for a month for leaving Jerome Park as you did. Why in the world didn't you stay?"

"Don't mention Jerome Park to me, if you please," said he, coloring up. "If I ever forgive myself for my conduct there I will be contented never to see another race or taste another glass of wine."

"Hundreds of others did as badly as you," added Ed.

"That doesn't relieve me any," returned George.

"But had you remained you could have retrieved your losses. I came out four thousand ahead."

"And I," added Ed, "am twice as much ahead."

"While I am six times that much behind," remarked George bitterly. "Had I never drunk wine I would have been forty thousand dollars better off to-night."

"Egad! You'd better join the temperance ranters!" exclaimed Peter. "Hire a hall and make a speech."

"And take you for a frightful example," retorted George.

"Come, let's have some wine," said Ed.

"Excuse me, please—I——"

"No, I won't excuse you, Morton, and you won't go back on your friends that way."

"But I—I—don't—feel—like—drinking to-night," he protested.

"Of course you don't; but a glass or two will make you feel better."

"So I have always thought, but it generally ends by making me mount the stool of repentance."

"You won't drink with us, then?" Ed asked.

"No; you must ex——"

"Come, Peter, let's go," said Ed Van Wyck abruptly, turning and leaving him without another word.

"Don't cut your throat socially, George," whispered Peter, as he followed his cousin out of the room.

"Good heavens!" muttered George, amazed, "does society taboo a man who tries to keep sober? Must I lose my friends? No—I will drink enough to keep them and keep sober, too. I say, Ed, Peter, come back a moment!"

"Hello! What's up?" answered Peter, suddenly wheeling about and confronting him.

"Have a bottle of wine with me before you go?"

"Why, yes, of course," said Ed, grasping his hand. "I'll be candid with you, Morton, I can't stand your modern reformer."

"I guess you can't put me down as one."

"You're a jolly good fellow, Morton, but you'd make a very poor reformer. You're not the stuff they're made of."

"That's so," muttered George, sotto voce.

They drank the bottle of wine, and another, and still another, until midnight found them all deeply under the influence of the potations.

The two friends finally left him, and George, notwithstanding his temperance speech that evening, went to bed stone-blind drunk.

Next morning detectives came and arrested George for the bank embezzlement. He was taken to jail, tried and sent to State's prison. He was made don the convict suit and put to work in the shoe manufactory.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRISON LIFE—THE ESCAPE.

A thousand times did George Morton wish himself dead. Proudly sensitive, his soul revolted at the work he was assigned to do.

George Morton, a shoemaker!

But he had no option in the matter, and he worked faithfully, only to avoid the alternative of a terrible punishment.

One day, about a month after his entrance into State's prison, the keeper of his department placed a letter in his hands.

It had been opened by the officials.

It was from Irene!

And had been addressed to the care of the bank he had robbed.

The president redirected it to Sing Sing, with the endorsement on the reverse side—"please send your address to your friends."

He turned deathly pale and groaned:

"Oh, heavens, what have I lost!" he moaned, and then turned to read the letter.

It was from Irene. She had found out his New York address and wanted to know what he was doing and why he had not written to either her or his relatives.

"Thank heavens she does not know all!" he muttered, and the next moment he burst into tears.

His grief was sincere, but the thought that he must keep her in ignorance of the truth caused him to rack his brain for means of doing so.

"Was the letter for you?" asked the keeper, suddenly returning.

"Yes."

"Is your name George or Joseph Morton?"

"Joseph," was the prompt reply. "But this lady"—holding up the letter—"thinks it's George."

"Are you telling the truth?"

"Yes."

The keeper turned and left him.

"The record shall not rise up to condemn me in the future," muttered George, as the keeper left him.

George had given his name as Joseph at his trial.

Several days passed, during which time George never ceased to study how he could keep the secret of his crime, and punishment from his people.

"There is a lady in the office to see you," said one of the clerks one day, tapping George on the shoulder as he sat at work.

"A lady?" gasped George, turning deathly pale.

"Yes. Get up and follow me!" ordered the clerk peremptorily.

"I—I—don't wish to see her, sir," faltered George, looking more like a dead than a live man, so pallid-looking was he.

"Get up and come along, sir! She wants to identify you."

Poor George had to obey, and, rising quietly from his seat, with his work-apron on, quietly followed the clerk into the office, where a veiled lady gazed at him through her veil a moment, and then staggered back against the wall for support.

George gazed at her with his face blanched, but without moving toward her.

"Take a seat, ma'am," said the clerk, pushing a chair toward her.

"Leave us alone, please," gasped the young lady, in a whisper.

"You can see him alone in the next room," said the clerk, pointing to another door.

She darted through the door, and a moment later George followed her.

"George!"

"Irene!"

And they stood facing each other, each seemingly a statue of despair and woe.

"I have heard all, George," she moaned, sinking into a chair.

"My heavens!" groaned he, "it is more than I can bear!" and his sobs filled the room.

"Does Eva know it, too?" he asked, after a long pause.

"No—no one in Overton but me knows anything of it," she replied.

"How came you to know it?"

"Your lawyer informed me two days since."

"What—James Dudley?"

"Yes. He has been three times to Overton to see me, and at last told me in confidence. I suppose he did not know all, or he would not have done it."

"Yes, he did know all," said George, "for I told him everything the day I sent him to you and Eva. He was my lawyer, and I told him in confidence, for I did not wish you and Eva to know what the trouble was. Oh, I loved you so, Irene!"

"Yes, you loved me, I know, George, but you loved wine and your amusements more. Had you kept the pledge and loved me more than the wine cup this would never have been. But I did not come here to upbraid you, George. I love you too well for that, but to learn from your own lips the whole truth. Tell me, George Morton, are you guilty of——"

"Yes, guilty!" he cried. "And am no more worthy—never was worthy of your love, Irene. Go, leave me to my fate, as one unworthy of your thoughts."

"No, George, the man to whom Irene Hicks has plighted her troth she will never desert, though all the world beside forsake him."

George was thunder-struck.

He gazed at the beautiful maiden like one in a dream.

"Irene!" he gasped, "do you forgive—do you still have faith in me?"

"Yes, George, I forgive all, and believe in you still," she said, "for many better men than you have fallen in an evil hour."

George clasped her in his arms and pressed her to his heart, covering her face with kisses.

"I will go to the Governor and beg for a pardon for you," she said, gently disengaging herself from his arms.

"It will be useless," he said.

"Why so?"

"Because the influence of the bank is too strong against me."

"But you must get out of prison."

"What would you do, then?"

"Marry you when you have shown that you can resist the temptations of the wine cup," was her solemn reply.

"I will call heaven to witness that not a drop of wine shall ever pass my lips again!"

"Amen! And may heaven help you!"

A deep silence ensued, during which time the clerk came into the room to inform them that the time allowed for the interview had expired.

"I will come next week," she whispered, and passed out into the wide—wide world, and he to his work in the convict shop.

Just one week passed, and Irene Hicks came to the prison again. She was permitted to see him.

"I have seen the Governor," she said, her face as white as a sheet, "and he will not grant a pardon!" and then thrusting her hands in the folds of her hair she drew out two tiny little steel saws and handed them to him. "But I will wait for you in the old, deserted house on the hillside, a mile down the river, on the left side of the road, to-night. If you do not come I will be there to-morrow night and every night until you do;" and with that she kissed him and walked out of the room, leaving him gazing after her as if in a dream.

But a moment later he bethought himself of the little bits of steel she had placed in his hand, and quickly thrust them into the bosom of his striped shirt.

Never did a convict work more faithfully than he the rest of the day. His heart bounded with hope now that Irene, his heart's idol, had not thrown him off and forgotten him.

A furious thunderstorm was raging without when he commenced sawing on the little iron bars that secured his window. Vivid flashes of lightning startled him at times, and the dashing of the water of the Hudson against the foot of the wall, driven by the fury of the storm, kept up a roaring that drowned the sound of the little steel saw as it cut its way through the iron bars. One by one the bars yielded, until at last all but one was gone. That one was left for a purpose.

He tore up a blanket and made a rope out of it, one end of which he tied to the remaining bar and let the whole hang outside.

To crawl through the window and let himself down was easy work, but when he reached the end of the improvised rope he still found himself high above the water.

"Great heavens!" he gasped, "it isn't long enough! If I let go I'll be killed on the rocks below. Ah! that flash of lightning gave me an idea. If I can spring clear of the rocks below, the fall in the water will not hurt me. I'll do it!"

Placing his feet against the wall he bent himself for a spring, when a vivid flash of lightning revealed the head and shoulders of one of the prison keepers peering through the window and aiming a cocked and loaded revolver at him.

"Come back, or I'll fire!" hissed the keeper.

"The die is cast!" returned George, making a superhuman spring just as another flash of lightning revealed the terrible scene over the dark waters of the Hudson.

CHAPTER IX.

A NIGHT OF PERIL.

It was a terrible leap.

A leap in the dark.

But freedom and Irene Hicks were the prizes for which he risked his life in that moment of supreme peril.

He struck the water with a splash that for a moment or two stunned him, and he floated with the current of the mighty river.

But the cold water revived him and he boldly struck out for the shore below the boundaries of the prison walls.

"Free—free!" he muttered, as he stood up and glared back at the dark, frowning walls of the prison. "Heaven help me to stay so! Down the road one mile—old, deserted house on the hillside—how will I find it? Irene—darling, I am coming, and may heaven slay me if I repay not this debt of love!"

George Morton, through all his reckless dissipation, ever had a keen sense of gratitude toward those to whom it was due, and often lashed his conscience for negligence to those friends.

To reach the side of Irene now and pour out the gratitude

of his soul at her feet, was the incentive that lent wings to his feet.

He ran along the railroad track with the speed of a deer. The constant, fitful flashes of lightning showed him the way as he ran. But it also showed his prison stripes to a couple of men who were connected with the depot for supplies for the prison.

They were coming up the road together, having been called down there by urgent circumstances.

"By the Lord! if there isn't one of the convicts!" whispered one of the two men.

"Where?" asked the other.

"Just ahead of us. I saw him when the lightning—there! Halt!"

The two men made a spring at him just as he was in arm's length of them. But he saw them at the same moment and sprang aside—clear of the railroad track on the river side.

Bang—bang! went a revolver, and two bullets whistled uncomfortably near his head.

He owed his life to an accident. A stone turned under him and he fell, rolling down the bank into the river. Striking out he swam down the river several hundred yards ere he dared touch the shore again. But he finally did reach the bank, climbed out and reached the railroad track again.

"The train is coming!" he said, a moment later, as the rattling of an oncoming train of cars was heard above the roar of the storm. Suddenly a brilliant light fell around him—the reflection of the locomotive headlight, as the mighty iron horse came thundering around the curve.

"Ha! I am discovered!" he exclaimed, bounding down the embankment and plunging into the river again. "Thank heavens, they can't turn that light off the track!"

The train thundered by, and in another moment was gone.

"What a narrow escape!" muttered George, swimming back to the bank; "it was as light as day all around me when that train came around that curve there. That must be the curve near the old house on the hill. If the lightning should stop now I could never find the house."

Flash! came a blinding glare of lightning, during which he saw beyond him, up on the hillside on the left of the track, an old, deserted, half-tumbled-down house in the open doorway of which the figure of a woman was standing.

"Irene!" burst from his lips as he sprang forward, and the cry went up the hillside through the storm.

"George!" came back another cry, like the voice of a guardian angel, that caused his heart to leap for joy. He dashed forward, his eyes peering through the gloom up the hillside to catch another glance of her at the next flash of lightning.

It came, and there she stood, her face blanched white as a sheet, her whole soul centred in that gaze down the hill.

"Irene!"

"George!"

She was clasped in his arms.

"Saved—saved!" she murmured, as her head sank upon his bosom.

"Yes, darling; and by you!" he answered, covering her face with kisses. "Though all the world desert and shun me, thou art still true! May heaven desert me in my last hour if I be not faithful and true to you!"

"I will believe you," she murmured. "Heaven grant you may never forget this hour and the past!"

"Have you waited long for me here, Irene?"

"Yes—several hours. But now I am repaid for all I have endured. I have brought a suit of clothes for you and a disguise. Put them on as soon as you can and throw the others into the river."

"Where are they?"

"Here," and stepping inside the doorway she stooped and picked up a bundle which she placed in his hands. "Put them on. I will wait for you outside."

"But it is raining outside, Irene. Let me go and you remain here."

"No, I have an umbrella;" and without another word she stepped outside, leaving him in possession of the old, deserted house. He stripped himself of the convict suit he wore and donned the neat-fitting suit she had brought.

"Come in, Irene!" he called, coming to the door when he had finished dressing. "I have no hat!" he said, as soon as she entered.

"I have brought a hat and wig, so that your friends will scarcely know you."

"Alas! I have no friends now. Those who were proud to call me friend will know me no more."

"And therein lies your safety, George," she said, "for were they to take you by the hand again you would fall—fall by the subtle temptations of the wine cup. No, no, George, I am glad you have such friends no longer."

"You are my only real, true friend, Irene, and I care for no other," and he threw his arms about her neck and kissed her.

"Here is the wig, George, put it on; and here is the hat;" and handing them to him he adjusted them to his head as best he could in that worse than Egyptian darkness.

A flash of lightning revealed him in his disguise to Irene's watchful eyes.

"No one would know you now, George," she said.

"I am glad. But where shall we go now?"

"We must wait till the rain is over and then go."

"But go where?"

"I will go back to Overton, and you—you will enter upon a new life and make a name that will blot out the past."

"How can I? I have no money, no home, no friends to whom I can go."

"Here is money; an honest man will never lack friends," and placing a well-filled purse in his hand, she added: "If you remain true and steadfast, earning your daily bread and abstaining from the intoxicating cup, you can claim me as your bride, and I will follow you to the end of the earth."

"God bless you, Irene! and may heaven forsake me if I be not true to you! But you will let me see you often, to strengthen my heart and gladden my soul with your love?"

"Yes, George, when safety will permit. But you must prove yourself a true man in whatever part of the world your lot may be cast."

"Yes—yes, I will; but see, the rain has ceased, the clouds are breaking, and I can see the stars through the rifts."

"Take those horrid clothes and throw them into the river," she said; "I will wait for you here."

George kissed her again, and taking up the dripping convict suit he had discarded, he carried them down to the river and threw them in. The dark, rolling current carried them seaward. He turned away to retrace his footsteps up the hillside, when the sound of voices attracted his attention.

He listened.

"The engineer said he saw him on the track here in this curve," said one of the party.

"But he isn't quite fool enough to remain here," said another. "He's pushing for his friends in New York, and takes the track because it's the most direct route to the city."

"Then our best plan is to push on and overtake him. He can't travel in the daytime with those stripes on. We can overtake or pass him, and then head him off; come on, boys!"

The party passed on down the track, and George, all in a tremor, crossed over and ran up the hillside toward the old house.

CHAPTER X.

ONCE MORE AFLOAT.

"Irene—Irene!" he whispered, as he ran breathless to her side, "my escape has been discovered, the engineer of that train reported seeing my striped clothes on the track, and a party has just passed down the road in pursuit of me."

"Will they keep to the track?"

"Yes; I heard them say I would be likely to push on toward the city, and keep the track as the nearest route."

"Then we are safe—we will take the wagon road—come;" and taking his hand within hers they passed out of the old house, going toward the woods. They soon struck a path, along which they passed till they came to two horses tied in the bushes.

"Irene!" and the tears came again into his eyes. "Heaven bless you! I—I——"

"Hush, George; mount and let's be off. But help me up mount first, please."

George assisted her into the saddle and then mounted the other horse. They then turned into the main road and turned their faces northward toward Sing Sing, from which he had just escaped.

"They will never suspect us now, on horseback, and riding back into the town. We must go up to Albany, and there part till we can meet under better and more favorable circumstances."

"Be it as you say—of course, having changed my identity, I must change my name."

"Yes."

"What shall it be, Irene?"

"Hicks—let it be George Hicks."

They soon reached the town of Sing Sing, passed through it without stopping, and pushed on up the river until sunrise found them on the outskirts of a small village. They inquired the way to the village tavern, where they stopped, dismounted, entered and called for breakfast for themselves and their horses.

A hearty breakfast and an hour's rest and sleep found them greatly refreshed and ready for the journey. They paid the bill and rode off.

On reaching Albany they went to the Delavan House.

"Now, George, I am going to take the next train home and leave you here. The two horses are yours—I bought them. Sell them for as much as you can get, and then consult your own safety. Write me wherever you go, under the name of cousin George Hicks—I have a cousin out West by that name—and be careful never to mention the past or the name of your people. They might fall into the hands of your enemies, and thus lead to your arrest again. Good-by!"

"Good-by, Irene, my angel, my heart's idol!" and clasping her to his heart he covered her face with burning kisses, while tears rolled down his cheeks.

He saw her on the cars and then bade her a final adieu as the train moved off.

"There goes the best, bravest and truest woman that ever lived!" he muttered, gazing after the fast-receding train. "What would have been my fate but for her? What would I have been had I followed her advice and kept the pledge? I will keep it henceforth and forever!"

He returned to the hotel and sat down in the reading-room to think. He had much to think about now. The flood of memory swept over him, and he raised his soul in one grand resolve to be a better man, atone for the past, and forever destroy the bitterness of that broken bottle at home.

The next day he concluded he would sell the two horses, go down to New York City and there hunt up an old chemist, who sold a lotion that would change the complexion to any desired color, yet keep it soft and healthy, let his beard grow, throw away his wig, and thus transform himself into a brunette of the intense Spanish or Portuguese type.

The horses were sold through a commission house for a goodly sum, which he put carefully away for any future emergency, and then took the train for New York. On reaching the city he went to a small, unpretentious hotel, where he registered as George Hicks. The next day was spent searching for the old chemist of whom he had heard through his boon companions of former days. In his peregrinations around the city he came face to face with Ed Van Wyck, who so shamefully deserted him the moment he was accused and arrested. Of course, Ed did not know him; but George felt a flush of indignation burning his cheeks as he looked at the young man whose life could run on in smooth places after he, the victim, was sent adrift down the stream of another life.

At last he found the old chemist he was in search of, and succeeded in getting the long-desired lotion. As soon as he secured it he hurried back to his hotel, entered the bathroom, emptied the vial into the bath-tub, and then bathed. He came out, dressed as usual, and went to his room.

The next morning he found himself before the mirror, looking as dark as a Spaniard, which well suited his piercing black eyes and jet black hair.

"I can now throw away my wig," he said, "and appear as my natural self again. But I must change my hotel at once."

Going downstairs he paid his bill and left, going to another house, after purchasing a trunk and several suits of clothing.

This done, he kept himself confined to his room, or in the parlors of the hotel, reading, in order to let his naturally fine black beard have a chance to grow. He saw it announced in the papers that Joseph Morton, the embezzling bank clerk, had succeeded in escaping from Sing Sing, whither he had been sent for three years, and was still at large. It was supposed that a young lady, who visited him in prison the day before, had surreptitiously given him a small steel saw, with which he sawed asunder the iron bars of his cell window.

"Yes, yes!" he murmured; "that's the way it was. But henceforth he will be dead to his friends. They will never know him more; for that sentence still hangs over him, to be a standing reminder of the past."

CHAPTER XI.

THE HERO OF AN HOUR—THE RECOGNITION.

Time flew by, and George's beard began to cover his face, rendering his disguise still more complete. He often met acquaintances—Peter McDermott among the number—who never dreamed of his identity.

There were a number of young clerks who boarded at the hotel with him, with whom he made friendly acquaintance. They were clever, sociable and merry, all of them more or less addicted to drinking wine and beer.

"I say, Hicks," said one of them one evening at the hotel, "I notice you never drink wine. Are you a teetotaler?"

"Yes, I am," he said, boldly—"a total abstainer."

"Did you ever drink?"

"I never drink now," he said.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the jolly young fellows. "That miss was as good as a mile."

George gazed at them for a moment in surprise, and then sprang up and walked out of the room.

He dared not trust himself with them when the wine came in.

"Heavens!" he ejaculated. "Can I have no friends but those who would tempt me to my ruin? Where shall I go? What shall I do?"

He strolled out upon the street, feeling lonely and miserable. Every one whom he had tried to make a friend of had asked him to drink, and on his refusing had sneered at and taunted him.

Suddenly the cry of fire rang out on the night air, and people ran past him back toward his hotel. The next moment the fire engines came thundering by, and he caught the wild spirit of the moment and ran along with them.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "it's the hotel! I must save my trunks!" and dashing through the guard the police were establishing, he dashed into the burning building and sprang up the stairway toward his room.

"Save me—save me!" screamed a young, girlish-looking woman, running wildly along the corridor, blinded by the smoke and almost paralyzed with terror.

"Stop—I'll save you!" he cried, chasing her along the length of the corridor.

"Save—oh, save me!" screamed the terror-stricken woman, turning and running into his arms with such force as to upset both and they rolled on the floor together.

"Up—quick!" he cried, seizing her around the waist and springing down the stairs with her. Her screams filled the house.

On reaching the second floor he found the stairway in flames. He knew all egress by that route was cut off, and that there were no fire escapes in the house.

Rushing to a window he threw it up and cried out to the excited throng of people in the street below:

"A ladder—quick—a ladder!"

Ere a ladder could be placed for him the flames burst into the room. A dozen men below seized a long pole which had been used for a scaffold support and raised one end to the window.

George seized the heavy tassel cords of the damask window curtains, and tied the fainting form of the young lady to his own body, and then climbed out on the pole and began to descend amid the deafening applause of the multitude.

She was heavy to carry thus, but he held on to the pole with a grip that defied death itself, and slowly descended. The red tongues of flame reached out of the windows of the first story, as if angry at his escaping them, singeing his hair, and igniting the dress of the unconscious maiden.

"She's on fire!" yelled a hundred voices in the street. "Heaven help them—help—turn the water on her! There the fire is—no—it burns again! Look—oh, heaven, they'll fall! No—there they glide down the pole. He's a hero—they are safe! Hip—hurrah—hurrah—hurrah!" and the throng went wild over the daring, perilous feat, rushing forward, despite the efforts of the police to keep them back, and taking him, weak and exhausted as he was, and carrying him on their shoulders into the hotel in the block below, together with the unconscious young woman.

Just as they entered the hotel, so weak was he with the terrible exertion of strength he had made, he sank down all in a heap, gasping:

"Water—water—give me water!"

"Here—here is something better!" cried one, holding a glass of brandy to his lips.

In his semi-unconscious state he seized the glass and drained it to the dregs.

"Brandy—brandy!" he cried, a moment later. "Heavens, save me from—"

"Here—more brandy!" cried a warm-hearted individual, thinking he called for more brandy.

Half a dozen glasses were instantly brought and pressed upon him.

"No—no—no!" he said, waving them away with his hand. "Water—water—not brandy!"

"Take it, man; it'll do you good—drink it!"

"Fiend—demon!" he cried. "Would you kill me? I will not drink brandy!"

"Here's water," said another, giving him a glass of cold water, which he seized and drank eagerly.

But the large glass of brandy which he had unconsciously drank now began to affect him. It coursed through every fiber of his system and reached his brain. The old fire was rekindled and burned with fierce intensity. He arose to his feet and shook hands with those who crowded around him to congratulate him on his daring feat and perilous escape. The young lady was saved, unharmed, and but for him she would have been burned in the ill-fated building.

"Three cheers and a tiger for George Hicks!" cried a man in the crowd, on learning his name.

"Hip—hurrah—hurrah—hurrah!" yelled the crowd.

George bounded upon a chair and cried out:

"I don't know the lady—never saw her before. I went up to get my trunk out of No. 63, and met her running to and fro in the smoke."

"And lost your trunk, eh?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Come, fellows, chip in and pay for that trunk!" cried a man, holding up a five dollar bill above his head.

"Yes, yes! Put up or shut up! Here's my pile!" and the bills poured in on the man, who soon had a hatful of money for the hero of the hour.

He handed it to George, who took and crammed it into his pockets.

"Come, fellows, let's have a drink!" cried a well-known ward politician in the crowd, who never let such an opportunity escape him.

"Yes, that's the talk! Give us a speech!"

"Hicks—Hicks!" yelled the crowd; but George did not speak. He was literally lifted on the shoulders of the crowd and carried into the large barroom of the hotel, where the bartender set out the liquors with a lavish hand.

"I—I never drink, gentlemen," said George, as several glasses were handed him.

"Time was commenced, then," said the politician, "for you can't take our money, ride on our shoulders, and then not drink with us. Oh, no! Can he, boys?"

"No—no! Here's to you, George!"

"Here's looking at you!"

"Your good health!"

"May you have a gal at every fire!" and a hundred other toasts were thrown at him in such rapid succession that he was bewildered. The brandy he had already drunk was now making him reckless and irresolute. Eva—Irene—Sing Sing, his terrible sentence and escape, were all forgotten, and he took up a glass and drank it with the throng around him.

In such a jolly crowd of admiring friends one could not get away with one drink. The song and toast went around. The health of the unknown young lady was drunk, and they stayed there drinking until the fire engines went back to their quarters, leaving the hotel at which he had been living a smoldering heap of ruins.

Heated by the liquor he had drunk, he sang several old college songs, amid the wildest enthusiasm, his rich baritone voice just pleasing the jolly crowd of revelers. Suddenly, at the conclusion of a song, a voice cried out:

"George, I know your voice! But where did you get that face?"

Had the earth opened to receive him, George could not have been more astonished. He glared around him like a madman, leaped from the table and rushed through the crowd as if in pursuit of the unknown speaker.

CHAPTER XII.

DESERTING AN OLD FRIEND.

On hearing the familiar voice in the crowd pronounce his name, George Morton was seized with a great and sudden fear. He was naturally brave and fearless; he naturally

loved danger as affording a pleasant sensation in its presence, but the horrors of Sing Sing filled his soul with terror.

A recognition then and there would be but a passport to prison again.

No wonder he glared around him, and leaping from the table, sprang through the crowd for the door.

In the suddenness of the moment he forgot his disguise—forgot that he could deny his name, and pass even a rigid investigation.

"Hold on, George, old fellow!" said a young man, pushing his way through the crowd; "I haven't seen you since—why the deuce don't you wait for a fellow?"

"Three cheers for George Hicks!" cried a voice in the crowd, and such was the enthusiasm aroused by his daring and perilous feat in rescuing the young lady from the burning hotel, together with his splendid singing, that the cheers were given with a will and energy that assured him he would not be friendless in that crowd.

He stopped and looked back at the man who had given him such a fright.

"What kind of a racket is this, George Morton?" asked the young man, who turned out to be Hugh McFarlane, his classmate, chum and boon companion at college, and the accepted lover of his only sister, Eva.

"Who are you?" George asked, in a husky voice, glaring fiercely at him.

"Thunder! don't you know me?" Hugh blurted out, in great surprise.

"No—who are you?" he asked again, getting courage each moment.

"Are you not George Morton?"

"No."

Hugh stared at him as if he were half inclined to dispute the point with him. George returned the stare with interest.

"And your name isn't Morton?" Hugh asked again.

"No—and I can thrash the man who says it is!" and George assumed a hostile attitude toward his friend.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Hugh, "but I would have sworn you were my old friend and classmate, George Morton, though you are as dark almost as an Indian in comparison to him."

"Oh, that's all right," said George; "you are not the first man who has took me for George Morton. I would like to see the fellow that looks like me."

"Well, he don't look so much like you as your voices resemble. I never saw or heard of two men having a voice so much alike."

"Where is he—who is he?" George asked, as the crowd gathered around him, calling for a song.

"I don't know. I understood he was in a bank in New York; but the cashier informed me to-day that he had left the city, and that he didn't know where he was."

"God bless Charlie Osborn!" mentally ejaculated George, feeling more grateful to the young cashier than he ever before felt for any living man.

Hugh McFarlane eyed him strangely.

"Come, boys," cried the politician, "let's have another drink and another song from Mr. Hicks."

"Hip—hip—hurrah—hurrah—hurrah!" roared the crowd of enthusiastic men, crowding toward the bar again, pulling George along with them.

He and Hugh McFarlane stood up together, side by side, and drank to a better acquaintance.

"A song—a song!" cried the crowd, "give us another song!"

And taking him by main force they lifted him upon the counter of the barroom, where he sang several songs, to the intense delight of the crowd. They crowded forward and drank time and again, the bar doing a rushing business.

But the revel could have but one effect; many became drunk, and George among the number, notwithstanding his promises to the beautiful Irene, who had enabled him to escape from prison. Hugh became tipsy also and again accused him of being the original Jacobs—George Morton, the jolly good fellow at his class at Yale.

"You lie!" hissed George, dealing him a blow on the temple that felled him to the floor.

"A fight—a fight!" cried several near by, who delighted in nothing better than a combat between two young athletes.

But George sprang forward and rushed out doors, running down the street with all the speed he could command, having only one thought uppermost in his mind—to escape from a

friend who insisted on establishing an identity for him that would consign him to State prison as an escaped convict.

"I am out of that," he muttered, stopping several blocks below, almost out of breath, "but I'm awful dry—one more drink and that is the last. I couldn't help drinking with 'em after they paid me more than I lost by the fire."

Looking around he found himself standing in front of a saloon. He turned, went inside, took a seat at a table, and called for a glass of brandy. He no longer drank wine. It was not strong enough for him now. Strong, fiery liquors only could satisfy the raging thirst within him.

The brandy was brought and he drank it.

"That was good," he muttered, putting down the glass; "you may bring me one more like it."

"I would like to see the color of your money, sir," said the waiter, looking at him from head to foot.

His clothes bore signs of the rough usage in escaping the fire with the fainting young lady, hence the waiter was uncertain as to his financial integrity.

"The color of my money?" repeated George, greatly astonished, his former pride welling up in his heart. "Why, I can buy out your shebang and give it away. See there!" and drawing forth a roll of bills he shook them in the face of the waiter until his eyes beamed and a grin stretched from ear to ear.

"Yes, sir—yes, sir," stammered the waiter, bowing like a dancing master. "I beg pardon—you see, we get stuck so often, sir—another glass, sir—the same old thing?"

"Yes, and be quick about it, too."

"Would you like to be in a private stall, sir—some gentlemen prefer it to a public place like this—no extra charge, sir."

"Yes—the very thing I want—show me the way," replied George, following the smiling waiter into a curtained stall where he could sit by a table and drink his brandy without being subjected to the gaze of every occupant of the room. The bar waiter hurried back to the bar for the brandy, whispered a few words to the barkeeper, who mixed a drink, secretly drugging it heavily. George drank the mixture and leaned back in his chair against the partition wall and enjoyed the feeling of security and momentary privacy afforded him.

"Have another glass, sir?" the waiter asked, a few minutes later, coming inside the curtained stall.

"Yash, bring—hic—anuzzer glassh," he replied, almost asleep.

The waiter took up the empty glass, and leisurely walked back to the bar.

"How does it work?" the bartender asked.

"Just the thing," whispered the waiter, taking up the glass and returning to the stall with it. He found George all in a heap on the floor, having fallen from a chair, and utterly unconscious of everything around him.

"Ha! ha! ha!" chuckled the waiter, putting down the glass. "the fool and his money is soon parted. Show your money around that way and somebody will go through you. I'll take care of it till you sober up, and won't charge you anything, either. Ah, you've got a pile, by Jove! Why, blast my eyes if the fellow ain't stuffed with money! I'll bet he's been cracking a crib somewhere and just stuffed his pockets full, I won't give Bill but fifty, and keep the balance. Best haul I ever made in my life."

The waiter quickly stowed the money about his person, leaving a few dollars in one pocket as a blind, and then stole away, going to the bar, where he slipped a roll of bills in the barkeeper's hand, at the same time tipping him a significant wink.

"On the floor, did you say?" the barkeeper asked, aloud.

"Yes. Keeled over, dead drunk."

"We must put him out, then, or he'll injure our place. What the deuce makes a man make a fool of himself? Why can't a man drink like a gentleman and not get dead drunk like a beast?"

"Better put him to bed," suggested a tramp by the stove, who desired a bed himself, and who liked nothing better than to get there drunk.

A policeman was summoned and told to take him away.

"Search him and see that he has his money about him," said the barkeeper. "I don't want him coming around here to-morrow with a complaint against my place."

The policeman searched his pockets and found about three dollars in change. He then sprang his rattle for assistance, and in a few minutes George was borne out of the saloon between two stalwart policemen.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE TOILS AGAIN—THROUGH FIRE.

"Here, get up and come out, quick!" cried a gruff voice the next morning, and feeling himself roughly shaken, George opened his eyes and sat up.

He had been lying on the bare floor.

A glance told him that he was in a prison cell!

"Why, where am I?" he asked, looking up at the station-house keeper.

"Why, in the station-house," replied the keeper. "Don't recollect how you got in, do you?"

"No—what am I here for?"

"Dead drunk, of course."

George sprang to his feet and thrust his hands deep down in his pockets. The next moment he uttered a despairing groan and staggered against the wall for support.

"Robbed—ruined!" he gasped, turning ashen hued.

"Oh, your money is all right," said the keeper. "It's in the captain's safe in the office, but it'll take it all to pay the fine and costs of the case, I guess."

"Must be a mighty big fine, then," said George, giving the keeper an inquiring look.

"Bad old case—come out;" and following the keeper out he was placed in the midst of a motley crowd of desperate-looking, abandoned characters who had been arrested for various offences the night previous, and marched into the police courtroom, where they were disposed of in quick succession.

"What is your name, sir?" the justice asked of George, when his number was called.

"George Jones," he replied.

"Been drunk, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where do you live?"

"Out West—been only a few days in the city."

"Have you any friends here in this city?"

"No, sir. I came here in search of employment."

"You don't expect any man to employ another who gets dead drunk, as you did, do you?"

George hung his head in shame. How could he answer that question? The thought of his degradation overwhelmed him, and he stammered out:

"No, sir. I did not intend to get drunk. I drank too much, sir, and was drunk before I knew it."

"That's always the case," said the judge. "I'll have to send you up for ten days unless you can pay a fine of ten dollars and costs."

"I can't pay the money, sir," said George, turning to the officer in charge of the prisoners. "My money was taken from me last night, and locked up in the captain's safe."

"Then you will go with an officer and get it and pay the fine and costs."

On reaching the captain's office he was told that about three dollars in small change was all he had when brought into the station-house.

"I had nearly a thousand dollars!" he gasped, glaring at the captain.

"Three dollars was all we could find about you," said the captain.

"Who—who brought me here?" he asked.

The policeman who had brought him in told the story of the arrest, and of the fact of only three dollars being found on him in the barroom.

"Take him back into the courtroom and tell the judge he has only about three dollars here," said the captain, waving him away.

"But I had——"

"Come along, sir," interrupted the officer, laying a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"But my money!" almost shrieked George, in a desperate frenzy, pulling away from the officer. "I am robbed of——"

"I'll give you a taste of this club if you raise a muss here!" hissed the officer.

"But my mon——"

"You never had a thousand dollars in your life!" sneered the captain, "for you only had three dollars."

The officer clutched him by the collar and led him back into the courtroom again, where he was sentenced for ten days.

A deep groan burst from his lips, and he sank down in a chair, looking a picture of livid despair.

"Ha! ha! ha! laughed a bloated tramp, "ten days ain't nothin' ter six months. I've been through that ere mill, an' don't mind it no more'n nothin'. Got any terbacco about yer clothes?"

George heard, but still he only groaned.

"Irene," he muttered, "I am weak—unworthy of you. I cannot reform—I am demented—a poor fool, not worth a moment's thought from you! Oh, if I could only have died when I had friends!"

These bitter thoughts and musings agitated him until he trembled like a leaf, and seemed as weak as a child. They were all sent over to Blackwells Island, followed to the river by a motley crowd of yelling, hooting gamins, while at the same time the city was being thrilled with admiration of the heroic young George Hicks, who had performed such a perilous feat at the fire the night before. The morning papers teemed with glowing descriptions of the scene, and he could have had a passport to almost anything he wanted, had he but refrained from drinking. The knock down he gave to Hugh McFarlane was not mentioned in the papers; hence the world again remained ignorant of his degradation.

On the island he was thrown into the midst of the most desperate and despicable characters that the ebullition of crime in a great city like New York could bring to the surface. Low as he had fallen, his very instincts revolted at the association, and he made a resolve on bended knees, in his cell that night, never to drink liquor again.

"Heavens!" he moaned, "let me not forge this lesson!" and his heart and brain were on fire with the spirit of reformation.

The next day he was given a task, in company with a score of others, repairing the sea wall along the west side of the island, at which they toiled all through the day, stopping only for meals, until the shadows of night compelled them to cease work. Just before they struck off for the day George leaped from the wall unperceived into the water, where he stood close under the wall, up to his neck in the current.

The others were marched back to their quarters by the keepers, and his absence was not noticed until his number was called.

In the meantime, he prepared to swim across to the New York side, and thus escape under the shadow of the night.

"One more trial for liberty and Irene!" he muttered, as he struck boldly out for the other side.

The strong current carried him down stream until he was soon out of hearing of those on the Island. He was a good swimmer, and never before had he more encouragement to exert all his strength and skill in the water.

It was nearly an hour before he struck the piers on the New York side. The first one he touched had a number of sailors on it, so he was afraid to venture out there. He struck out for the pier below, and, on reaching it, climbed out and sat down to rest.

"What are you doing here, so wet?" asked a policeman, coming suddenly upon him as he sat there on the pier.

"I was fishing here," he replied, "and fell asleep, and the next thing I knew I tumbled into the water."

"You made quite a narrow escape, then?"

"I should say so," he replied, rising. "But I must go home or else I will take cold."

And he lost no time in getting away from the officer.

"From Yale to Sing Sing," he bitterly mused, "and from Sing Sing to Blackwell's Island! Where next, I wonder? What a pity it is that there is no asylum for fools! I ought to be sent to one for life!"

He crossed Broadway, and made his way over to Jersey City, where he wandered about looking for something to eat, and somewhere to lay his head for the night. He was tired and hungry and wet.

"Heavens! I am starving and shivering in the street, with not a friend who would dare acknowledge me before the world. I, the son of a rich man, in the prime of my young manhood, a graduate of Yale College, and capable of great things, a shivering beggar in the streets of a great city! Oh, wine—brandy! thou art a cruel, bitter deceiver! How can I beg? How can I bear to ask and be insulted, bluffed and pushed aside as an impostor, even though the pangs of unger gnaw at my vitals! I—I say, mister!"

But the man passed on, unheeding his call.

He hung his head in shame, and hot, scalding tears poured down his cheeks.

"I'll not beg—I will not be bluffed and insulted; I will look

for work, and failing in that will write to Irene, confess all, and then plunge into the river again, to rise no more. This world is no place for one who has lost the will power to be a man."

He wandered aimlessly about the streets for some time, not caring what became of him, until he came to a saloon in which some one was singing a song with which he was familiar. He stopped and listened. The song was poorly rendered and the voice devoid of melody.

He looked inside, and saw that the man was a hired singer. "Why may I not sing for a living, too?" he asked, as he walked inside and took a seat by the table nearest the door.

"What'll you have, sir?" asked the attendant, as he was seated.

"I came in just to learn that fellow how to sing that song," he said, looking up at the waiter. "I don't wish to drink anything."

"Then you had better get out before you are bounced!" was the reply. "We don't want any of your music here."

"Let's hear him sing!" cried several near by, and always anxious to please their customers, the managers told him to sing.

He carried the crowd with him as by magic. His rich baritone was full of pathos and melody, and song after song followed in rapid succession, until the hired singer was in a furious rage of jealousy.

"How came you so wet?" one asked.

"I had no money to pay my way across the river," he said, "so I swam across."

This caused a sensation.

"That's a lie!" cried singer number one.

George turned upon him and gave him a look of sadness, saying:

"The time was when that would have brought you a thrashing, but rum has brought me down so low that even one like you can insult me with impunity."

"Hip—hip—hurrah—hurrah!" cried a half-drunken youth, "a temperance lecture in a barroom!"

"I did not intend to do that," said George, turning to the proprietor, "but the truth came out in spite of me."

"And drinking whisky brought you down to this?"

"Yes."

"Do you want an engagement to sing?"

"I will do anything for a living, sir."

"But you may get drunk again," said the proprietor.

"I will sign the pledge, sir, and you must not urge me to drink nor allow me to drink in your place."

"By the holy Apple Jack!" exclaimed the manager of the saloon, "I'll give you the pledge and then hire you. Hold up your hand and swear."

George held up his right hand and repeated, after the bartender:

"I, George Hicks, do solemnly swear that I will not drink any intoxicating liquors so long as I am in the employ of John Benson, so help New Jersey!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the crowd, hilarious over this singular proceeding in a barroom. "Give us a temperance song, now!"

"Shall I, sir?" George asked, turning to the proprietor.

"Yes, give 'em anything they want so they'll stay and drink."

George sang that beautiful song, "The Drunkard's Child," with such pathos that a pin drop could have been heard in the house, so still and silent were they all under the melody of his voice. One man, who was the father of several children, and whose dissipation had brought them down to the hard pan of poverty, arose with tears in his eyes and reeled out of the room. Even the barkeeper was touched, and for the moment he remained conscience-stricken and silent.

"Give us something lively now," he said, and George regaled them with several choice sentimental songs that gave infinite satisfaction.

The result was he found a home where he could exist, though not live in luxury. He was given a suit of clothes, and told to make himself agreeable to everybody that visited the place. But it soon became known that he was the hero of the hotel fire in New York, and hundreds crowded to the place to see him. He was a winning card for the proprietor.

The first singer resolved on revenge for his ousting him from the place he was incompetent to fill.

After laying all his plans he and a number of confederates attended at one of his concerts in the hall of the barroom, and suddenly turned off the gas.

Bang! went a cannon torpedo, with a report as loud as a musket, just over George's head.

Bang! bang! bang! went a dozen others, and several were hurt. George stood unmoved on a little raised platform which served as a stage. Suddenly he felt himself seized from behind and a bag thrown over his head and securely fastened about his neck.

It was saturated with some kind of oil, the strong fumes of which came near suffocating him.

The next moment a match was struck, applied to the bag, and in an instant a bright blaze illumined the room, as a cry of horror went up from the dumfounded spectators.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BLACKMAILER.

The sight of a man with his entire head wrapped in a sheet of flame, created the wildest consternation in the saloon, and men shouted and ran about like madmen. One more self-possessed than the others sprang upon the stage just as George fell exhausted and suffocated to the floor, and glared at the burning bag a moment—but only for a moment. He seized it in both hands, gave a powerful jerk that came near dislocating George's neck, and pulled it clear of his head.

"Turn on the lights!" he cried, on hearing George gasping for breath on the floor.

In a few moments the gas was turned on again, and the place lighted up. Nearly all had left the hall to escape the police, who they well knew would soon rush in.

"How did it happen? Who did it?" cried the excited proprietor, rushing on the stage, armed with a loaded revolver.

"I don't know," replied the man who had saved George's life; "but the devil himself must have had a hand in it. He'd have been dead in another minute!"

"How is it, George, my boy?" the manager asked, kneeling by his side.

"Ugh—ugh—ouf! Water!" gasped George, as though still strangled by the flame and smoke.

"Water, here—quick!"

"Here it is," said the bartender, quickly producing a glass of ice water, which George clasped and drank at a single gulp.

"Where are they?" he exclaimed, springing to his feet, and glaring around the hall; "let me get at them once, and they can have all they want out of me!"

"Who were they, George?" the manager replied.

"I only know one of them," he replied; "but wait till I meet him again, and then the funeral will give it all away!"

"But do you know any one of them?"

"Yes."

"Then I demand that one's name."

"I'll settle with him when we meet a——"

"You can settle only your part with him," said the manager; "but I've got something to say about this racket, myself."

George leaned forward and whispered in the manager's ear.

"Gr-r-reat ginslings!" exclaimed the astonished manager. "Mad because you can out-sing him, and wanted to burn you up! I'll roast him over a slow fire if I ever catch him in my place again!"

"Just wait till I meet him!" and George shook his head in a determined way that boded no good to the ex-singer.

It was a very narrow escape for George. The flames had not reached him, but his throat and lungs had been filled with the dense smoke from the burning oil, and in another moment or two he would have been dead.

The news of the singular attack made him a hero among the habitués of the place, and the weeks following found the house crowded every evening, coining money for the proprietor.

One day a young man came into the place and said:

"There's a letter in the New York post-office for George Hicks."

"How do you know there is?" he asked.

"It's advertised," replied the young man, producing a newspaper, and pointing out the name in the column of advertised letters.

George looked at it like one in a dream, and then crossed the river over to New York, hastening to the old post-office

on Nassau Street, called for and received the letter. A glance at the handwriting told him it was from Irene, as it was postmarked "Overton."

Hurrying into a saloon where he could sit down and read it, he tore open the letter and eagerly devoured its contents.

"My dear, darling George," it began, "your silence fills my heart with evil forebodings, for if you were true and faithful your heart would prompt you to write to me. When I read in the papers the praise of young George Hicks, the hero of the — Hotel fire, my heart swelled with pride, for were not those eulogies all showered on my George? I loved you then better than ever before, and the dreary past was forgotten. No one knew who George Hicks was but myself, but I kissed the paper and called down the blessings of heaven upon your head. You have the stuff in you that heroes are made of, and if you remain firm and true to yourself, to me, and the pledge you took in my presence on that terrible night, you will yet prove it to the world. But, George, you must keep away from temptation—remove yourself from any association that will lead you to drinking places; and above all things, write to your Irene. Perhaps the memory of her may save you sometimes when you forget yourself. What are you doing? Are you engaged in any business, and do you still need any assistance? One-third of the year is gone already, and if you keep the pledge to the end of the year, you can claim me as your bride. But, George, my soul, my heart's idol, if you drink wine again you will, in effect, tell me that you love wine better than you love Irene Hicks. Your mother, father and Eva are all well, but sad. Their hearts are crying for the only son and brother—and he—oh, heaven! will the past ever be blotted out? They love you, George, and heaven keep you from ever letting the wine cup crush out that love and rob you of all that is dear on earth. Write to me and tell me you love me, and that you are still true to your Irene."

George remained in deep thought for several moments after reading that letter, gazing upon the name that was so dear to his heart.

"What would she think," he muttered to himself, "if she only knew all? Drunk, robbed of all my money, and sent to Blackwell's Island, and now a singer in a low concert saloon, where liquor is sold every day and night in the year. I am fallen low—yes, very low, George Morton, and fate is against you. You can't get away from liquor; you linger about where it is, and some day you will fall again. Here is a beautiful woman, rich and lovely, ready to become your wife whenever you remain respectable and sober for one short year, and yet you can't do it! You are a poor, pitiful, weak fellow, who couldn't say 'No' to a grasshopper."

He arose and went out of the saloon upon the street, when he felt a tap on the shoulder from behind. Wheeling suddenly around he found himself face to face with a rough, villainous-looking specimen of manhood.

"Good!" chuckled the man. "I'm glad ter see yer, I am! Yer give 'em ther shake on ther island nice, yer did so!"

"Who—who are you, anyhow?" George asked, turning a little pale.

"Oh, I'm one of ther gang what went over in ther Black Maria with yer. Got any stamps about yer what yer don't want, eh?" and the wretch held out a dirty palm toward him.

"No," was the reply.

"Then it's mighty onhealthy for yer, pard," said the man, "cause I'll give yer away bad ef yer don't make a raise. Come down ter Water Street an' set 'em up for ther boys, or——"

"I'll go," said George, interrupting him, turning ashen-hued lest the wretch should turn him over to the care of an officer to be sent back to the Island. They went down to Water Street and entered one of the low dens there, when the wretch called for the vilest of liquors for both.

"I don't wish to drink, myself," said George, "I—I don't feel well."

"Of course yer don't. Yer're sick as a dog, yer is. Take a good pull an' it'll make yer hum."

"But I don't want it!"

"Drink, man!" persisted the fellow. "Yer can't go back on a cove that way."

"But I don't drink any more, and——"

"Yes, yer do. Drink with a cove, or back yer go."

George dared not refuse, for the man had him in his power.

He raised the glass to his lips and drank the vile stuff at a single gulp.

"Now yer'll feel better, pard," said Bangs, the name of the wretch into whose clutches he had so unexpectedly fallen. "I knowed yer when I put my blinkers on yer."

"How long have you been out?"

"A month."

"What are you going to do for a living?"

"Cracking cribs," was the reply.

George started.

"Hush—sh—somebody will hear you!" he whispered.

"They all do it hyer," said Bangs, smiling; "fill 'em up ag'in."

The glasses were refilled and drank several times, till George became beastly drunk and fell asleep on the table at which they were sitting.

"Guess ye're ther cove as pays for them drinks," said Bangs, quickly thrusting his hands into George's pockets and taking therefrom every cent he could find, and the letter from Irene, which he stowed away in his own pockets. He then paid for the drinks and left, leaving the unconscious victim behind.

CHAPTER XV.

A GOOD SAMARITAN.

On waking up, George found himself in a corner of a room bare of furniture, feeling a burning thirst, the result of the vile liquor he had been drinking.

"I wonder where I am?" he muttered, rising to his feet and entering the barroom.

It was the one Bangs had forced him to enter by threatening to expose him to the authorities.

"Give me a glass of brandy," he said, reeling up to the bar, his first thought being to quench the thirst that was consuming him.

"Let's see your money first," answered the bartender.

"Money! I've got—by the gods, I've been robbed!" and as he stood with his hands in his empty pockets he looked the picture of despair and desolation.

"Robbed! Ha! ha! ha!" chuckled the barkeeper, "that won't do here. I've heard that song too often to be taken in by it."

"But I say I have been robbed!" exclaimed George, indignantly. "I had——"

"Get out, you duffer!" cried the barkeeper. "Every old bummer that comes in here without money, talks about being robbed. You can't play me for a marine."

"But——"

"Get out, I say, or I'll——"

The burly barkeeper rushed forward and dealt him a stunning blow between the eyes that sent him rolling out of the door to the ground, where he lay for a moment unconscious. But he soon scrambled to his feet and gazed around him.

"You sheer off from here or I'll bounce yer!" called out the barkeeper from within.

"Breakers ahead, mate!" cried a half-drunken sailor, moving hastily away, looking uneasily up the street. George turned and saw a policeman coming toward him. He knew it was best to leave if he would keep away from Blackwell's Island.

"I'll see you again and settle this score!" he hissed at the barkeeper, and then hurried away, followed by the tantalizing laugh of the bartender.

He was soon on another street and out of the way of the policeman, but his mind was a battlefield of passion.

"It's the first time in my life," he muttered, with suppressed bitterness, "that I ever pocketed an insult and a blow! A Morton has fallen so low that even the veriest scum of the earth can kick and cuff him with impunity. Heavens, what a wretch I am! Knocked down and ordered away like a dog, after having been robbed of every cent I had in the world!? But it serves me right—it serves me right. I ought to be in Sing Sing to-day instead of here. Oh, Irene—Irene, forget that such a wretch ever lived, and let him die unwept!" and overcome by his feelings he burst into tears there on the street and wept as if his heart would break.

"What's the matter with you, sir?" asked a gentleman, in a kindly tone of voice.

"I am friendless, homeless, penniless and too wretched to endure life any longer!" he replied, not caring what he said, or to whom he spoke.

"That's a bad fix to be in, surely," said the gentleman, eyeing him from head to foot. "But how came it so?"

"Drinking," replied George, bitterly. "Liquor did it—nothing else, sir!" feeling that confession was good for his soul.

"Then why don't you stop drinking?"

"Why don't I—why don't I? Good heavens, man, I would give the balance of my life in servitude to the man who will tell me why I do not stop drinking. The nearest solution of the problem is this—I am a fool!"

His terrible earnestness and mental excitement attracted the gentleman. His curiosity was excited, and he resolved to know more of the young man who was thus struggling with an ungovernable appetite on the threshold of his career.

"Come with me," he said, taking him by the arm and leading him away. "I want to talk with you, and know more about you. Here, come into this barber shop and get brushed up. You will feel better then, and after that we'll have some breakfast."

George made no objection, but quietly took a seat in the chair and submitted to the barber's manipulations.

"Now let's get some breakfast," said the kind-hearted gentleman, leading the way down the street to a restaurant, where they both partook of a hearty meal.

"Now tell me your name," said the gentleman, "and how came you in this fix? You are evidently a man of education, and ought to be doing better than this."

"My name is George Hicks," replied George, "and drinking has ruined me. That's the story in a nutshell."

"Hicks—Hicks!" murmured the man. "It seems to me I've heard that name before—read it somewhere."

"Yes—I am the one who saved that young lady at the — Hotel fire."

"Thunder! Is that so?"

"Yes, sir," modestly replied George.

"But the paper did not say you were a drinking man."

"No. I've been trying to quit drinking, but could not. Everybody is against me. I never go in and drink by myself. It's others who cause me to do it. On the night of that fire the boys carried me to a barroom on their shoulders, chipped in and raised me twice as much money as I had lost in my trunk and clothes, which were burned up, sang songs, drank wine and beer, and made me drink with them until I was drunk, and then I knew nothing more till I woke up in the station-house, penniless."

"Good heavens!"

"I was sent to Blackwell's Island for ten days, but made my escape two days later—went to Jersey City and got an engagement to sing every night in a concert saloon. I kept sober until last evening, when one of the prisoners on the island, who had served out his time, met and recognized me. He threatened to expose me to arrest if I did not treat and drink with him. The result was I got dead drunk, was robbed of every cent, and was knocked down and kicked out this morning. Everything is against me. The best thing I can do is either to go on and get dead drunk whenever I can, or else jump into the river and thus escape the fate that pursues me so relentlessly."

"No, sir, that would not be manly," said the gentleman. "I never heard of such a chapter of unfortunate circumstances in my life before. I believe you have the making of a man in you, Mr. Hicks, and I will go to the authorities and get your sentence to Blackwell's Island commuted. You will then no longer have that fear hanging over you."

"You will not find my name on the list, sir."

"What name did you give?"

George leaned forward and whispered in his ear.

"Very well. Come with me and I will see if we can't settle it up with the judge;" and leaving the restaurant they went out and up to the office of the philanthropic gentleman, where George was left alone for about two hours. At the end of that time the man returned and said, smilingly:

"You can now lay aside all fears of the island. I have arranged that matter so that you will not be troubled again unless you are brought up on another charge, in which case it will go hard with you. Now, tell me, what can you do?"

"I can keep books, sir."

"What else?"

"I have had no other business experience, sir."

"Well, you can call here every day till I get you a situation as bookkeeper. But remember, that to drink again is to lose my friendship. Here is a little money with which

you can obtain lodging and meals for a week. Good morning."

Thus bowed out, George went away, feeling that to drink again would be the act of an ingrate.

"I won't touch another drop," he said; "and would not had I not met that wretch Bangs. I have a chance once more, and Lord help me if I fail! I'll go over and get my things from Jersey City, get a settlement with the manager and leave him."

On reaching the saloon he found the manager in a rage over the loss of his services the previous night. His customers had clamored for him until, in disgust, they left, and went to a rival saloon to hear singing.

"Great hewgags!" exclaimed the manager, on catching sight of him, "where have you been?"

"I've been in a muss over in New York," he replied, "and want some money to pay out of it."

"Been drinking?"

"Yes, got drunk," he frankly replied, resolved on turning over a new leaf on lying as well as drinking.

"That breaks our contract, then," said the manager, "and I shall pay you no money."

"You won't?"

"No."

"I agreed not to drink anything in your place."

"It was for anywhere else, too."

"You owe me about twenty dollars—will you pay me now?" George asked with great firmness.

"Not a cent."

"Then I'll see if I can't draw away your crowd across the street."

A rival saloon over the way got nearly all of the customers the night before. They had repeatedly offered increased pay to George if he would desert his employer, a fact well known to the manager. George turned on his heel and was about to leave when he was called back with:

"Here, if you'll agree not to go there, I'll pay you."

"Agreed!" cried George, shaking hands with the manager.

CHAPTER XVI.

A NEW LEAF.

The manager paid him in full to date, and George turned to leave again.

"Where are you going now?"

"I'm going to my boarding house."

"But you are coming back to-night to sing?"

"No."

"Great hewgags!" exclaimed the astonished manager, "where are you going?"

"I am going to reform and quit this business, and——"

"Oh, oh! Ha! ha! he! he! haw!" roared the manager, in which he was joined by a dozen others standing around him.

"You may laugh as much as you please," said George, flushing up, "but I am done with this business forever."

"That's good—ha! ha! ha!"

"Very good," quietly remarked George; "you would all find it good to swear off, I guess."

They all laughed the more, and George turned away the second time to leave. But the manager called him aside, and whispered:

"You won't leave me yet, I guess. I'm up to the neck with you, George Hicks, and I guess you'll find it'll pay better to stay with me than to go to Blackwell's Island again."

George looked at him and smiled.

"What do you know about Blackwell's Island?" he asked.

"Not as much as you do, perhaps, but still enough to send you back there as an escaped prisoner."

"I guess not, quietly," remarked George, turning to leave him.

At the door he met a policeman, who laid a hand on his shoulder.

"You are my prisoner, sir."

"What for?"

"Escaped from Blackwell's Island."

"I am ready to meet that charge."

"Will you go over to New York without a requisition?"

"Oh, yes! But suppose you telegraph the authorities if I am wanted there?"

"I'll do so at your expense."

"No, you won't!"

"Then we'll deliver you to the officer they may send over."

But to the astonishment of all it was found that he was not wanted, and was therefore released. The manager had known for several weeks that George had escaped from the island, having bought the secret from one who possessed it for the very purpose he had tried to use it. Foiled in his scheme, he cursed and swore, calling him vile names, and dared him to fight. But George now resolved to keep out of difficulties, and so made no reply to his enraged employer.

He went away and at once crossed over to New York, resolved to get into new associations, where he would not be exposed to temptation as he had been in the past.

"Oh, I've lost Irene's letter!" he suddenly exclaimed, feeling nervously in each pocket of his clothes. "Oh, if any one should find it! But it is only signed 'Irene,' but how could I have lost it? That scoundrel Bangs must have taken it last night while I was asleep. It will be a bad day for him when we meet again—ah! here he comes now! You scoundrel, you robbed me last night!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" chuckled Bangs, half drunk on the money he had taken from George, "you can't have me arrested for it without sending yourself back to the island."

"I can go up for only ten days, but you will go for three years. Now which will you do—pay up or go up?"

Bangs was astonished.

He glared at him as if he failed to fully comprehend him.

"Pay up or go up!" said George, sternly.

"Do you mean it?"

"I do!" and George held out his hand for the money.

"I'll give you what's left of it."

"Very well, be quick about it."

Bangs fumbled in his pocket and brought to light about ten dollars, just one-half of the amount taken from George, which he turned over to him. There was a gleam of hate in his eyes that George did not fail to notice as he walked away.

Ten minutes later a policeman tapped him on the shoulder and said:

"I want you—come along."

"What for?"

"Blackwell's Island."

Bangs had set the officer on his track.

But it was soon demonstrated that he was not wanted, and he was again released.

Then Bangs swore revenge against him.

But George laughed at him, and went his way. He took board and lodging in a private family, resolved to turn over a new leaf and have no associates who drank. The next day he called at the office of his new friend and waited for an interview. He was soon admitted to his private office, and there learned that he was to keep books for a small dry goods house up on Grand Street.

"Take this card to Mr. Leroy on Grand Street, and tell him you are the man I spoke to him about," said his friend, giving him the address of the merchant.

"I cannot tell you how much I feel," said George, pressing his friend's hand; "but I will try to prove my gratitude by being a better man."

"That's the best way, sir, as actions speak louder than words," answered the kindly philanthropist, and George went away to wait on his new employer.

He entered upon his duties at once, giving entire satisfaction, and in a week had won the esteem and good will of every one in the establishment. Among the salesladies was a tall, beautiful brunette, Miss Ella Hanscombe, with whom he soon became a great favorite. One evening he engaged to escort her to a ball, where she induced him to drink a glass of wine with her after dancing together.

Fatal glass!

Fatal influence!

He yielded to women, wine and song, and fell again, deeper and lower than ever, in the degradation of inebriation.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FAREWELL LETTER—THE PLUNGE INTO THE RIVER.

On finding that he had been again so weak as to break his pledged promise not to drink again, George plunged deeper and deeper into the vortex of dissipation, keeping away from the store on Grand Street, caring to see no one he knew, and

not caring what became of him. But in a couple of weeks his money was all gone, and then he was forced to get sober. He was put out of his boarding house for non-payment of board, and his trunk seized for debt. Penniless, homeless and friendless, he wandered aimlessly about the city till the shades of night again enveloped the world. Tired and hungry, he crept into an empty hogshead to sleep.

"Here, come out of that!" cried a policeman, who saw him enter it.

"I'm not troubling anybody!" he replied.

"But I'll trouble you if you don't come out and get away from here," said the officer, threateningly. "Be off with you!"

"But what's a fellow to do?" he asked. "I have nowhere to sleep and this——"

"Go to the station-house. If you would let whisky alone and go to work you'd have a home like any other decent man—move on, or I'll run you in!"

He turned away, sick at heart.

"Yes," he muttered, "whisky did it all. He is right. She is lost to me forever. I will never be a man again. Oh, God, what a worthless wretch I am! I am unfit even to live and breathe the same air with better men and women. My best friends have I gone back on, proving myself a worthless wretch in everything. Better, far better for all would it be if I were dead and forgotten—yes, dead, and I would soon be forgotten by all save Irene, Eva and my poor mother. I'll do it—I'll do it. Let me write to Irene and then I'll do it. God help me, I will go out of the world in which I have done nothing but disgrace myself!"

Looking around him he entered a small tobacco store and approached the proprietor with:

"I haven't a cent of money in the world, sir, and I don't want any. I only want a piece of paper and a stamped envelope to write to an only friend. Can you give them to me, sir, with only my thanks for payment?"

"Yes," said the tobacconist; "I certainly would not refuse such a request as that;" and placing the paper, ink and pen on the counter, told him to write, while he looked for an envelope and stamp. George seized the pen and wrote rapidly:

"Dear, Darling Irene—I have fallen again, lower than ever—too low ever to rise again. But it is all over now. I will never drink again, for I will be no more long before this reaches you. I couldn't help it, Irene, for I am weak and unworthy of one so pure and good as you. I know you will grieve for me, but you will forgive your George for all that. We will meet again in the great hereafter, for God will not let me perish when I fly to Him to escape the demon in this world. There is no wine beyond the grave, darling, and I will be safe there, and wait your coming on the other shore, where we will share the joys that have been denied us here. Good-by, darling, good-by. Kiss Eva and mother for me, and assure them of my undying love for them. Forgive me, darling, I am true to the last, though weak—weak—weak."

"Your George."

"Here is the envelope, sir, ready stamped," said the tobacconist, handing him the envelope over the counter, on which George had written the letter.

"Thanks—thank you, sir," said George, now pale as death, with the resolution to die, firmly fixed in his mind, reaching across the counter and grasping the friendly hand; "I will remember this kindness, sir."

"Don't mention it," said the tobacconist.

"No, I will remember it, though!" and sealing the envelope and addressing it to "Miss Irene Hicks, Overton," went out upon the street to mail it.

"You will find a letter-box on the next corner below," called the tobacconist, as George walked away under the gaslight from the street lamp.

He found the letter-box and stopped before it, gazing at it as if he would devour its contents. Then, quickly raising the letter to his lips, he kissed it a dozen times and dropped it into the box.

"The die is last, I cannot recede now," he muttered, white as a sheet, as he turned away toward the river. When within a few feet of the end of the dock he stopped and looked back at the flickering lights of the great city.

"Oh, thou great Sodom!" he said, "thou art nursing a serpent that will yet sting thee to death, even as it hath stung me. I would have lived, loving and beloved, but for the temptations of the wine cup. I go where thou canst not follow me. Irene, Eva, mother, father, all farewell!"

Then, with a quick, impulsive movement, he turned and ran toward the end of the pier. Making a desperate spring, he plunged headforemost into the seething waters of the East River.

Down—down—down he went, carried by the fierce impetus of the plunge, until the buoyancy of the water forced him to the surface again. But ere he reached the surface he was insensible.

Fortunately for all, a couple of 'longshoremen were rowing near by when the plunge was made. They heard the splash and quickly rowed in that direction. But the swift tide gave back no sign of the life it had swallowed up, and the two men were on the eve of turning away when one of the oars struck something that caused them to pause and examine it. It was the body of a man.

It was the unconscious form of George Morton.

They lost no time in pulling him into their little rowboat, after which they quickly carried him ashore and gave him in charge of the authorities.

He was carried to a hospital and medical aid summoned. It was found that life was not quite extinct—that it hung as by a slender thread which seemed ready to snap asunder at any moment. But science and skill resuscitated him, and he was brought back to life—snatched from the very portals of death by kind hands.

He opened his eyes and groaned.

Gazing around him, he murmured:

"This is death—so dreaded by all, and yet so little understood, and——"

"You feel better now?" asked a kind-hearted physician, leaning over him.

"Yes, much better," he replied, in a half whisper; "it isn't as bad to die as I thought it was."

"I suppose not; but you were about as near dead as any man I ever saw to live again," replied the doctor.

"Live again! Ain't I dead?" he asked, in amazement, glaring at the doctor.

"I don't think you are," said the doctor, smiling; "at least you can't get a certificate of death just now."

George raised himself on his elbow and glared around the room in evident astonishment.

"Still alive to wretchedness—to misery!" he moaned, falling back on the little cot on which he was lying; "a life worse than a living death to me. Oh! why did they not let me die? It would have been over, and I would have been at rest!"

"What was the matter with you, sir? Why did you try to drown yourself?" asked the doctor, quite interested in the case.

"I drank liquor, sir, till I was homeless, penniless and friendless, and life a burden intolerable."

"Can't you be a man, sir, and let liquor alone?"

"No—I've tried and tried in vain. I've lost the will power to resist and refuse when I should."

"That's bad," said the doctor, shaking his head, "but you should try it again."

"Only to fail again!" moaned George, closing his eyes as if he would shut out every vision of the world he had tried to leave.

The terrible shock he had received brought on brain fever. When the doctor visited his ward again, he found his patient muttering incoherently, and tossing to and fro in a consuming fever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SAVED AT LAST.

Days and weeks passed and still George hovered on the brink of eternity. But for the patient, tireless nursing of an angelic creature, who never left his side from the hour of her arrival at the hospital, he would have passed the river of death and been at rest.

One day the fever left him.

He was weak and helpless, scarcely able to speak or raise a hand. He opened his eyes and looked up at the pale face of the nurse who was bending over him.

"Irene!" feebly burst from his lips.

"George!" came from Irene Hicks' pallid lips. "Oh, thank heavens, you are spared to me!" and sinking down on her knees by the bedside, she buried her face in the pillow, and gave way to a flood of tears—tears of joy.

The stillness of death filled the room. Their hearts communed in silence with each other.

"You must not talk, George," she said after a while, raising her face from the pillow and pushing back the hair from his white, clammy brow; "you are too weak now to do so. I received your letter, and knew you were in trouble again. The next day I saw it announced in the papers that you had been taken from the river and brought to this hospital. I came to you at once, darling, and nursed you back to life again. God has given you back to me, and I ask no more. Hush—you shall not talk; I will leave the room if you try to do so. There are better days in store for you, dear George, so be of good heart and get well again."

He closed his eyes and let the silent tears bedew his pillow. She would not allow him to talk, but she could not stop his thinking. He did think, and reflection did a silent, wonderful work. The deathless devotion of Irene touched him deeply—more than anything in his whole career.

Days passed, and still Irene remained his faithful nurse. He soon was able to sit up in bed, and then talked freely. He told her all—keeping back nothing—excusing nothing, and vowed again to reform. This time, he said, God would aid and sustain him.

"Oh, I have prayed for this!" sobbed Irene, her heart full to overflowing; "you will stand up a free man now, for God will sustain you. You are a Christian now, George, and this trouble was sent upon you to make you one. Get well now as fast as you can, and we will arrange for the future."

"But can you have confidence in my future, Irene? I have failed you so often—disappointed all your hopes, and cruelly abused your love and confidence."

"George, I have never lost faith in you. Your pride has ever stood in our way. That has been broken now."

"The bottle is broken also, Irene," said he, interrupting her.

"Yes, thank heavens, it is broken! Let its broken fragments be a warning to you in years to come. I have some good news for you, darling, if you are able to bear it."

"I can bear anything coming from you, dearest."

"It is this: I have been to the Governor again and told him the story of your life, and——"

"Irene!"

"Wait, George. Did I not say that it was good news? He has given me his word that if your life for one year shall be blameless he will require you to voluntarily return to the prison from which you escaped, after which he will grant you a free and full pardon; and I promised him that you would do so."

"Go to prison again!" exclaimed George, in bewildered amazement.

"Yes—for your pardon."

"But why go there to get it?"

"Because he could not pardon you as long as you are a fugitive. It would kill him with the people to do so. Politicians have a motive in all they do, you see."

"Yes; I will do as you have promised."

"What makes your skin so dark? I could scarcely recognize you when I first saw you here."

"I did it as a more effectual disguise," he replied.

"Will it always remain so dark?"

"Until the antidote is used at will."

"I am so glad of that. Your own sister or mother would not know you now. What will you do when you get strong enough to go out into the world again?"

"I will lecture on the evils of wine drinking, telling the world what it did for me," was the calm reply.

That startled her.

She sprang to her feet and asked:

"Have you the courage and strength to do that, George?"

"I think I have."

"Are you sure you have?"

"I feel that way."

"Then I will go with you and encourage you till you can go forward like a hero. Oh, George, you make my heart leap with joy!"

Another week and George was strong enough to go out into the world again. Irene paid all his expenses at the hospital, supplied all his wants, remaining at the hotel as his sister, until he was ready to deliver his lecture.

The night came, and with it a large crowd to hear him. He came forward, calm and collected as an old veteran, and commenced the story of his career down—down, deep into the vortex of dissipation and crime, until the doors of the

penitentiary closed upon him. He then told of the heroism and deathless devotion of Irene, who never deserted him, even in his darkest hour, until every heart in the house was touched. His tenderness and love in speaking of her caused the tears to course down his own face, and convulsive sobs were heard throughout the vast audience. Tremendous applause greeted him, and hundreds pressed forward to sign the pledge and don the blue ribbon.

Irene was so overcome by his fervid eloquence that she sat like one in a dream after he had ceased speaking. Her cup was full to overflowing, and she bowed her head in silent prayer of thankfulness for what she had seen and heard.

The papers the next day teemed with eulogistic reports of the lecture, and the next evening the hall was densely packed. He spoke again, and again were the people swayed by his eloquence to a pitch of wild enthusiasm. Hundreds signed the pledge. Women wept like children, and pushed forward to press his hand.

Invitations to speak in other towns and cities poured in upon him, and in a few months his name was on everybody's lips. The very great romance of his life, together with his burning eloquence, great zeal and earnestness, made him an object of interest everywhere.

One day Irene said:

"George, I am going back to Overton."

"No, Irene, you must not," he said. "You must not leave me."

"But I must, George. I will wait there for you."

"Wait there for me?"

"Yes. You will come to Overton for your bride, will you not?"

George looked at her a moment in great surprise.

"Yes," he murmured—"to the end of the earth even. When shall I come, Irene?"

"When you have the governor's pardon in your pocket, after having complied with his conditions."

"Nothing else, Irene?"

"No. You will then be all that my heart can desire."

"But I may fall again?"

"No, George, you will not, for you are now removed from your old associations, where they cannot reach you. If you do not go to them, they will never come to you, save for a good purpose—to hear you speak. If you fall again, after having thus erected a barrier between the past and the future, I shall lose all hope, all faith, and die of a broken heart."

"And I would be the veriest wretch that ever trod the earth. No, Irene—heaven helping me, I will never touch my lips to the wine cup again."

"I will trust you and wait, George. But ere I go I must have your promise that you will not rest in idleness a single day—that you will go all over the country and speak to the people about drinking. Tell them everything you know about it. When the year has expired, and you have the governor's pardon in your pocket, I will get our people to invite you to come to Overton to speak. You will come, and then we will wed before the audience."

George took her in his arms and kissed her a dozen times.

She went back to Overton, and George set out on a grand crusade against liquor. His fame went before him, and immense audiences greeted him everywhere. He went to Albany, and the legislature, together with all the State officers went to hear him. He called on the governor, and introduced himself as the escaped convict whom Miss Irene Hicks had spoken to him about. The governor advised him

to go at once to the prison at Sing Sing and surrender himself, promising to send him a pardon the next day.

"I will follow your advice, sir," said George, "and will devote my life to the work of trying to keep men out of such places."

The next day the prison officers were astonished to see Joseph Morton, the escaped convict, march into the office and surrender himself. He had removed the olive stain from his skin, and appeared in his original guise.

The reader will remember that his name appeared on the prison records as Joseph Morton—not George—and that his personal acquaintances, with but few exceptions, knew not that he was a convict.

"Why, where have you been all this time?" demanded the keeper.

"In New York City and vicinity," was the reply.

"But how did you avoid the detectives?"

"By changing my name and identity—very easily done."

"Then why have you come back here?"

"Because I am another man now, and desire to have nothing like this sentence hanging over me. I will cheerfully serve my time out if I am not pardoned by the governor."

"Your return will have great weight with the governor. But tell us how you managed to get out?"

"Oh, I got out through the window, of course"; and George smiled as he spoke.

"Of course we all know that; but who gave you that steel saw with which you—"

"Oh, that's another thing. Of course, I wouldn't tell you or any one else that."

"Who was the young lady who came to see you that day?"

"Nameless here forever more," said George, smiling.

"Well, you're back again and will have to go to work"; and the keeper was about to send him to the prison barber to have his head shaved, when George asked:

"In consideration of my having returned voluntarily to the prison, I would ask one favor."

"What is it?"

"That you will not cut my hair off nor put on the prison suit until I have been here twenty-four hours."

The officials looked significantly at each other.

"Why do you ask that?" the keeper asked.

"Because I have good reasons for believing that the governor will grant me a pardon."

"Has he been approached by anyone for that object?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I will grant your request; you will be locked up, though."

"Of course. I expect that."

The next day the pardon came and George went forth a free man, to the no small indignation of the bank president and directors of the bank which he had robbed. He immediately procured the chemical wash that had served him so well in the past, and again came out of the bath a dark, olive-tinted, Spanish-looking young man that he was when disguised as George Hicks. He then, under the name of George Hicks, went forth as a lecturer, making an appointment to speak at Overton about six months earlier than Irene had contemplated. She wrote to him about it, but he persisted in coming, and all Overton turned out to receive and hear him. Judge Morton and his family occupied front seats, and during the delivery of the lecture the tears coursed down his face, and Mrs. Morton wept at the recital of his terrible struggle with the demon of strong drink. Something about his voice reminded her so much of George that at times she almost rose to her feet in her wild desire to clasp her poor wayward boy to her heart.

CHAPTER XIX.

FATHER AND SON—THE BROKEN BOTTLE—CONCLUSION.

At the conclusion of the lecture hundreds rushed forward to sign the pledge, and the utmost excitement prevailed. Old men and women, with tears streaming down their faces, pressed forward and took him by the hand.

"Sir," said Judge Morton, his voice quivering with emotion, "your voice and manner remind me very much of my son—my only son, whose drinking habits has cut him off from me. I was harsh with him—too severe—and he went away from home. I have never seen him since. If George Morton ever signs the pledge at any of your meetings, tell him that his father forgives all from that moment"; and no longer able to control himself, Judge Morton uttered a great sob, sank down on a seat and buried his face in his hands.

George leaned over, and, placing his hand on his shoulder, whispered:

"Father, can you forgive me that blow with that bottle?"

Judge Morton sprang to his feet and gazed into the dark face of the young man before him.

George returned the gaze unflinchingly, saying:

"I am George, and——"

"My boy—my boy!" cried the judge, throwing his arms around him and pressing him to his heart.

"Mother—mother!" cried Eva, bounding forward. "It's brother—our George—come home at last!"

"My son—my son!" screamed Mrs. Morton, rushing forward and throwing herself on his bosom. "My heart kept going out to you all the time you were talking."

Of course, the meeting between father and son created much excitement in Overton, and hundreds again pressed forward to shake his hand. He was invited to speak again and again in Overton, and such was the success of his meetings that the public opinion forced the bar-keepers of the town to close their places of business and seek other means of earning a living.

The impression prevailed that his exposure to hardship during his career, and delicate health afterward, caused his skin to seem so dark.

One day George received a letter from one of his old graduating class, saying that a reunion of the class would be held in New York City on a certain day, when each and every one would bring his famous memorial bottle to be filled again in honor of the occasion.

"But you will not go, dear George," said Eva, when he gave her the letter.

"Indeed, I will, and carry my bottle."

"Your bottle!" she exclaimed, in great alarm. "Why, have you kept that bottle all this time?"

"No, but father has"; and George led her into the library, where he showed her the broken bottle which Judge Morton had glued together—all but the piece which George had carried away with him on that eventful night, and told her the history of the bottle.

She was horror-struck.

"You can understand why I will go now, dear sister," he said. "I will take that broken bottle there, and, exhibiting it, tell the story of it since I brought it away with me from Yale College. I may induce others to break theirs, but in a different way."

"But are you sure they will not ridicule you and cause you to drink with them?" she asked, fearful of the result.

He gave her a smile that strengthened her faith in him a thousandfold, saying:

"No power on earth can ever induce me to voluntarily return to the wine cup. Sister, I am free from it now, and, heaven helping me, I will remain free."

George did go to the reunion of his class, and met with them at Delmonico's. Every man had his bottle, wrapped in tissue paper, standing by his plate, and at a given sign each bottle was unwrapped and held up to view, with shouts and applause.

"Ah! Ha! ha!" cried one, pointing to Morton's broken bottle. "Look at Morton's bottle! It's broken and patched up. I'll wager a basket of wine that he got drunk and broke it!"

Another burst of laughter greeted this, and a general uproar ensued.

"Gentlemen!" cried George, "if you will resume your seats and give me your attention, I will tell you the story of my broken bottle."

"A speech—a speech from George Morton, the best fellow in the class!" and something like quiet reigned.

George took up his broken bottle and held it up to view, saying:

"Classmates, you are right when you charge me with having broken my bottle when drunk. I did break it that way, and broke it over my father's head one night in his library."

Here a sensation was felt in the very air of the room, and George went on, without interruption, to deliver one of the most remarkable speeches ever made at a public dinner. His eloquence swayed his classmates and companions as the winds sway the reeds—they bent before it, weeping like children; and when he called upon them to break their bottles and chains at the same time, sign the pledge, and forever leave off wine, they sprang to their feet, dashed their cherished memorial bottles to the floor, breaking them into a thousand pieces, until the room was literally strewn with broken glass.

Such a dinner speech was never before made, nor did one ever have such an ending. No wine was drank after that speech, and every member of the class signed the pledge.

"George Morton!" cried Hugh McFarlane, who, the reader will remember, was engaged to Eva Morton, "at college you were the leader in every racket, and we never failed to follow your lead. You now lead another way, and still we follow. Three cheers for George Morton!"

"Hip—hip—hurrah—hurrah—hurrah!" cried they all, rising, and making the roof tremble with their shouts.

Hugh accompanied George back to Overton, where he told the story of George's wonderful triumph. Eva received them with tears of gladness and joy.

Irene Hicks was now the happiest maiden in Overton. George had shown her the governor's pardon, and she had consented to marry him at an early day, and to add to the interest of the occasion, Eva had consented to become Mrs. McFarlane at the same time.

The next month was a busy time in the Hicks and Morton families, making ready for the double wedding. In the meantime George was making a name for himself as one of the most eloquent lecturers of the day—he was now sailing under his proper colors, George Morton—and his proud parents were not ashamed of "our son George."

Years have passed since then, and George and Irene have five beautiful children in their home, to whom they tell the sad story of the old broken bottle, which stands in a glass case in George's library, a monument of the terrible evils flowing out of the wine cup.

George became a wealthy man. He remunerated the bank in full for his defalcation of years before and thus stood square with his fellow man.

Reader, take warning. Break the bottle and be a man—a free man, and remember the story of "The Broken Bottle."

Next week's issue will contain "SLIPPERY BEN; OR, THE BOY SPY OF THE REVOLUTION."

HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

THE LIBERTY LOAN

By W. G. McADOO, Secretary of the Treasury.

For the purpose of equipping with arms, clothing and food our gallant soldiers who have been called to the field; maintaining our navy and our valiant tars upon the high seas; providing the necessary means to pay the wages of our soldiers and sailors and, if the bills now pending in the Congress pass, the monthly allowance for the support of their dependent families and to supply them with life insurance; constructing a great fleet of merchant vessels to maintain the line of communication with our brave troops in France, and to keep our commerce afloat upon the high seas in defiance of the German kaiser and his submarines; creating a great fleet of aeroplanes, which will give complete supremacy in the air to the United States and the brave nations fighting with us against the German military menace; and for other necessary war purposes—the Congress of the United States has authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to sell to the American people bonds of the United States bearing four per cent. interest, with valuable tax exemptions, and convertible under certain conditions into other issues of United States bonds that may be authorized by the Congress. The official circular of the Treasury Department gives full details.

There is now offered to the American people a new issue of \$3,000,000,000 of bonds to be known as the Second Liberty Loan. They will be issued in such denominations and upon such terms that every patriotic citizen will have an opportunity to assist the government by lending his money upon the security of a United States government bond.

It is essential to the success of the war and to the support of our gallant troops that these loans shall not only be subscribed, but oversubscribed. No one is asked to donate or give his money to the government; but every one is asked to lend his money to the government. The loans will be repaid in full with interest at the rate of four per cent. per annum. A government bond is the safest investment in the world; it is as good as currency and yet better, because the government bond bears interest and currency does not. No other investment compares with it for safety, ready convertibility into cash, and unquestioned availability as collateral security for loans in any bank in the United States.

People by thousands ask the Treasury constantly how they can help the government in this war. Through the purchase of Liberty Bonds every one can help. No more patriotic duty can be performed by those who cannot actually fight upon the field of battle than to furnish the government with the necessary money to enable it to give our brave soldiers and sailors all that they require to make them strong for the fight and capable of winning a swift victory over our enemies.

We fight, first of all, for America's vital rights, the right to the unmolested and unobstructed use of the high seas, so that the surplus products of our farms, our mines and our factories may be carried into the harbors of every friendly nation in the world. Our welfare and prosperity as a people depend upon our right of peaceful intercourse with all the nations of the earth. To abandon these rights by withdrawing our ships and commerce from the seas upon the order of a military despot in Europe would destroy prosperity and bring disaster and humiliation upon the American people.

We fight to protect our citizens against assassination and murder upon the high seas while in the peaceful exercise of those rights demanded by international law and every instinct and dictate of humanity.

We fight to preserve our democratic institutions and our sovereignty as a nation against the menace of a powerful and ruthless military autocracy headed by the German kaiser, whose ambition is to dominate the world.

We fight for the noble ideal of universal democracy and liberty, the right of the smallest and weakest nations equally with the most powerful to live and to govern themselves according to the will of their own people.

We fight for peace, for that just and lasting peace which agonized and tortured humanity craves and which not the sword nor the bayonet of a military despot but the supremacy of vindicated right alone can restore to a distracted world.

To secure these ends I appeal to every man and woman who resides upon the soil of free America and enjoys the blessings of her priceless institutions to join the League of Patriots by purchasing a Liberty Bond.

OUT FOR MONEY

—OR—

A POOR BOY'S CHANCE IN A BIG CITY

By J. P. RICHARDS

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XIV.

BESS IS STOLEN.

Mr. Wilson asked for an explanation, and Phil related the experiences of the last few days.

"Then who do you think wrote this letter?" he asked.

"I don't know but it may have been Waterbury. He and Hiram Maynard seem to have been working against me."

"H'm! and this Maynard says that you are not Phil Hunt, and wants you to borrow money from me to tell you who you are?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, do you want the money?" asked the other, suddenly.

"No, sir," said Phil, promptly. "If I paid him he might tell me nothing, and might ask for more when that was gone. He is a scoundrel, and I won't have anything to do with him."

"And yet you would want to know your identity?"

"Yes; but Hiram Maynard is not honest about it. He's only on the make."

"And he and his partners are very clumsy scoundrels. If Waterbury wrote this letter he is a forger, and a stupid one at that. Why do you suppose he did it?"

"So that Miss Daisy would think she had made a mistake in turning him off, and would receive him again. Do you see, he makes me say that I really tried to steal her bracelet that night?"

"Yes, but nobody believes it. All I can say is that if he did forge this letter, it is a very stupid piece of business."

"That's what I told Maynard, and he hasn't yet told Waterbury that I have gotten away."

"Well, it's a very stupid business, and Waterbury is a fool as well as a knave. We are well rid of him."

Later that day Phil came across the young villain in the street, and laughed in his face.

Waterbury looked greatly surprised, but said, with a show of indignation:

"What do you mean by laughing at me?"

"Why, it makes me smile to think that you were in such a hurry. Why didn't you wait till Maynard told you I had been shipped to China before you forged my name?"

"I don't know what you are talking about!" snapped Waterbury. "I don't care where you go, China or any other place. What is it to me?"

"Nothing, of course," laughed Phil. "Mr. Wilson

got that letter, and thought it rather queer till I told him that you wrote it and then he understood."

Phil did not know for a fact that Harold had forged the letter, but that he had made a shrewd guess was shown in the other's face.

"I don't know what you're talking about at all," he growled, flushing, and looking greatly confused, and the hurrying away, as if unwilling to prolong the conversation.

Phil saw Matthews again, and it was arranged that he should go up-town to live and take Bess. Consequently early in the next week he came home with a new suitcase in which to pack his clothes, having already sent home a small trunk for the child's things.

"So you're goin' ter give us de shake, are yer?" asked Kitty, as the packing was going on. "Dat's just like all youse fellers. De minute yer strikes a good t'ing, yer go back on yer friends."

"Howld yer tongue, Kitty Mulligan," said the girl's mother, "or I'll take me hand to ye; yis! an' a shtrap in it, besides."

"I don't care," pouted Kitty. "Lick me if yer like. I kin get over dat. It's only de low-down tricks like dis dat I can't stand fur, dat's all."

"Go'n, I tell ye, an' don't be torkin' foolish. Sure, yez knows it's for the bye's good that he's goin' away, an' not becos he doesn't like us. I'll bet anything that av a feller wid more money nor Phil kem along yez'd go wid him in a minyute."

Just then Butts, who knew what was happening, came in and said:

"Say, Kit, I got two billboard tickets to de Thoid Avenor Theayter, an' I got one carfare besides. Come on, let's take it in."

"Go'n, I won't."

"All right, den; I'll ast Sadie Finn. But I t'ought I'd ast youse foist. So-long, I'll see——"

"Oh, hold on, didn't I say I'd go wit' yer? Wait till I get me hat an' coat. I guess I can have more than one feller."

Kitty's idea was to make Phil jealous, but it did not, and Butts' plan of getting her out of the way prevented what might have been a stormy parting.

Phil did not neglect his old friends, as Kitty declared he would, for he went down there at least once a week, and often when he was in the neighborhood would stop and talk to Kitty for a few moments.

Several weeks passed, and Phil was getting on well at the bank and in his studies under the direction of Matthews, his salary having already been raised and another advance promised at the beginning of the year.

He had not seen Maynard nor Waterbury for some time, and had no apprehension on that score.

The cold weather was at hand, Christmas was not far away, and one day Matthews told the boy to invite all his old friends up to the flat, and he would give a party for Bess.

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

When a boat containing a large consignment of lemon and vanilla extract and hair tonic for the Indians, who never make cake, and are not bold, capsized in Lake Vermilion, Minnesota, recently, fishermen circulated reports that the fish swam in circles, zigzagged and did an unlimited number of tango gyrations.

Saying that he would save the officials the trouble and expense of taking him to the county jail at Anderson, Ind., to serve a fifteen days' sentence for intoxication, William Blake took his commitment in his pocket and delivered it to Sheriff Hughes with the request that he be locked up. His request was granted.

Although he is 105 years "young" and fought in the Civil War, "Uncle" John Dowd of Williamina, Ore., has not had enough of excitement and wants to enlist in the United States Army and go to France to fight the Germans. He is as earnest in his desire to enlist as any youthful recruit. Dowd walks two miles daily and often makes six miles a day on foot.

Within the confines of Los Angeles County, California, there are 65,000 colonies of bees, the value of the combined output of which in honey and wax reaches a grand total of \$175,000 a year, furnishing healthful, profitable and pleasant employment to not less than 2,500 persons. This total is believed to be the high-water mark of the industry in the United States.

In a Western power plant the attendants are making clever use of the periscope idea. In order to read the temperature of the oil in transformers, it has been necessary in the past to use a step-ladder to reach the thermometer mounted at the top of each unit. By using a simple periscope on each transformer, it is now possible for the attendants to read the thermometer scale, which is illuminated by a lamp suspended near it, from the floor.

According to a Japanese navy officer recently in Washington, says the New York Times, the new battleship Nagato, now under construction in the naval dock at Kure, Japan, will be the largest war vessel yet undertaken by that country. She will displace 32,000 tons and while similar in many respects to the Ise, under construction at Kobe, is expected to embody several important improvements and to develop more speed than the twenty-two knots credited to the latter vessel. Japan has five dreadnoughts in commission or building, and four battle cruisers. Two additional ships of the battle cruiser class are to be completed by 1923.

The Secretary of War has authorized department commanders of the army to discharge for fraudulent enlistment enlisted men under eighteen years of age, who have enlisted fraudulently, when satisfactory evidence of age is furnished, the provisions of Paragraph 1380, Army Regulations, to apply in each case. Evidence in such cases should consist of (1) a duly authenticated copy of a municipal or other official record of the soldier's birth, if such record exists; (2) the affidavit of the soldier's parents (or guardian) as to the date of his birth; and (3) the affidavits of two or more disinterested persons who are able to testify from their own personal knowledge as to the soldier's age.

People living in temperate climates have little conception of the heavy expense and great inconvenience which dwellers in many parts of the tropics are subject to because of the rapid deterioration of iron. The humidity, together with the penetrating salt in the atmosphere, if one is located near the sea, serves rapidly to corrode metal parts or structures which, in other regions, would last a life-time, says Popular Mechanics. For example, in the South Sea Islands corrugated roofing of galvanized iron will be covered with red rust within from five to seven years. Because of this condition pure brass is much in demand, particularly for boat and other marine fixtures. Hooks, pins and other fittings which are merely coated with brass or are bronzed, go to pieces within a few months under the action of the elements and so are not worth buying at low prices. The tendency is for wood also to decay rapidly in a humid tropical climate.

Boston has established a new club house for enlisted men in the Service, especially in the Navy, at 11 Nassau street, in that city. It is called "Shore Leave Club" and was established and is managed by the Boston Y. M. C. Union. It has grown in popularity and the rooms and beds have been filled and emergency cots are now being used. On Sept. 8, seventy-two men were accommodated, including twelve who slept on the roof. Many have enjoyed this small but home-like club. Here men may lounge, smoke, write letters or play games. The Woman's City Club committee, which assisted in opening "Shore Leave Club" continues to help. A canteen supplies the men with minor luxuries; nominal charges are made for sleeping and meals. Breakfast has been served every morning since the club was opened, and in addition Sunday dinners now are served. The Union is to establish a second club in its official headquarters in Boylston street.

NEWS OF THE DAY

GIRL WEARS LIVE SNAKE.

A brilliant colored yellow and black gopher 40 inches long is being used as a necktie by Miss Nellie Bradley of Los Angeles, Cal., who is now at Switzer's Camp in the Arroyo Seco. Miss Bradley thinks a great deal of her pet and cannot understand the aversion to her fad.

DOG SAVES TWO LIVES.

By saving the life of three-year-old Marie Duffey of No. 119 Somerset Street, New Brunswick, N. J., a collie dog, Nellie, escaped execution the other day.

The child's father had decided to kill the dog and was about to lead it away when the girl, leaning out of a third-story window to see him, fell. The dog ran toward the house. The girl fell on the dog and was uninjured, and Nellie was granted a reprieve.

THOUGHT POOR; HAD \$4,000.

John Wildman, eighty years of age, a farmhand, who died at Mercy Hospital, Tiffin, Ohio, was believed to be penniless. Investigation has shown that the old man's trunk at his employer's home in Eden Township contained a store of currency amounting to \$4,000. It is believed he has no heirs. Orlando Shepherd, his employer, has been named executor.

WOMEN TO DRIVE TAXIS.

A significant indication of the growing shortage of men chauffeurs is embodied in a recent advertisement of the Detroit Taxicab and Transfer Company of Detroit for women to operate their electric taxicabs, says a bulletin sent out by the Electric Vehicle Section of the National Electric Light Association. Women drivers would only be employed during the day, and are to receive exactly the same schedule of wages as the men. The advertisement said no previous experience was necessary. More than 500 women have applied for chauffeurs' positions, and several are already operating electric taxicabs with great success, the association reports.

FALSE LEGS FOR HORSES.

A new invention of artificial legs for horses and dogs was offered to the Philadelphia branch of the Red Star Animal Relief by a French-American veterinarian who refuses to disclose his name.

This man, who, since the war started, has taken twenty-one trips to Europe with horses for France, claims that although the horse or mule will no longer be good for active service, it may be used for light farm work if these legs are used.

The leg, or crutch, which has been used successfully in this country, is made of steel, with a special

quadrant spring imitating the vertical and lateral flexings of the ankle and fetlock. By means of this many crippled horses and mules, which would otherwise be killed, will be given a chance to live.

DOG DRIVES AUTO.

A big Airedale dog had his day recently and took advantage of his opportunity. In other words, he drove an automobile down the street during a hard rainstorm and stopped at the corner without an accident, while the owners of the car had sought refuge in a store near-by during the downpour.

The car was standing near the curb on a business street in Pueblo, Cal. The street sloped somewhat and the car was headed down hill. Two Airedale dogs were in the tonneau of the car, and tiring of the monotony of being "gentlemen," abandoned their good manners and began chasing each other about the car.

One of them jumped over the front seat and his paws landed on the steering wheel. The impact caused the wheels of the car to be turned from the curb and the machine moved down the street to the corner, where it was stopped, but not before the dog had "driven" it half a block.

FIRST U. S. FLAG ON FRENCH LINE.

In the little village of Potter Hill, Rhode Island, lives the woman who has the honor of having sent to Europe the first United States flags which were raised on the French front. Mrs. William MacDonald of Maxson street, Ashaway, forwarded several flags, with comfort bags and other gifts, to the boys at the front in France several weeks before war was declared with Germany. A letter of thanks received by her recently from a young British soldier tells the story of these flags and their significant fate.

The flags were hoisted by this soldier over his little army hut, close to the firing line, two days after President Wilson's proclamation of war against Germany. This was several days before the flag had been displayed by the Massachusetts soldiers, which was reported in the press despatches of this country to be the very first United States flag thrown to the breeze after war's declaration.

The young soldier who had received the Potter Hill flags was among the first to hear of the President's proclamation, and lost no time in raising the emblem of this Republic.

He writes: "Soon men from all along the lines swarmed about the hut like bees to a hive, to learn what was up and then to make sure if the news could be true, and being officially assured of the fact, took on new life, hope and courage."

HUSTLING JOE BROWN

—OR—

THE BOY WHO KEPT THE TOWN CLOCK

By WILLIAM WADE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XVI (continued)

The other addresses were on business streets, although Joe, who knew nothing of New York, was not aware of that.

In the corner of each envelope was written:

"Introducing Mr. Joseph Brown."

Joe looked at the clock.

It was nearly two.

"Should he wait until the next night before communicating with Colonel Redding?" he asked himself.

That meant good time lost.

He determined to chance it in the early morning, so four o'clock found him in the act of climbing over the wall at Oaklands.

"The best thing that ever happened was the death of that dog," he said to himself.

That was the time he was fearing that another might have taken the dead one's place, but luckily for him Mrs. Redding did not like dogs, and the dead animal's place consequently remained unfilled.

Joe made his way to the secret door, and after ringing managed to get old Tommy down.

"Sure, it's early you are," said Tommy. "The boss is in bed and aslape. Unless your business is mighty partickler, I t'ink you best wait until to-night."

"That's just what it is," said Joe, "otherwise I should not have come. I shall have to see him, Tommy."

"And you're liable to be caught going away. It will be daylight in a few minutes, so it will. Sure, I was near caught myself yisterday. It wud be a bad job for de boss if dey knowed he was here."

"Chase yourself, Tommy. All this talk is taking up just so much time."

"You better come up to the sittin'-room. It won't do to be standing here," said Tommy, starting up-stairs.

So Joe went up-stairs, and after a few minutes Colonel Redding came out to him half-dressed.

"You made an early call," he said, "and you want to get out of here at once. You have seen the leather man, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir. He came to my place at one o'clock. I didn't want to wait until to-night before seeing you and so lose a day."

"You were right. It would have been better if you had come even earlier. Well, what's the word?"

Joe told of the visit, and showed Colonel Redding the letters.

The letter of instruction was carefully read.

"He is right," said the colonel. "The people of Reddington must be interested. Next thing we know the works will be fired again. Tommy tells me that there are men from the city in there every day studying up on my machines. It is all they can do, now that they find they can't get those papers, and as soon as they are done the works will surely be destroyed, unless we take hold. You better get to New York at once."

"I am ready to start first train, sir. But let me ask you if you know the people to whom these three letters are addressed?"

"I know them only by reputation. Noble is a millionaire many times over; the other two are rich and influential men. I could enlarge on this, Joe, but I am determined not to butt in even to the extent of telling you the leather man's name. It will be best for you to work it all out for yourself. You will need money."

"I suppose I shall, sir. I haven't much, but if you are short, I think I can manage to raise my fare."

Colonel Redding smiled.

"Your fare is only a very small part of it, Joe," he said. "I will write you a check for three hundred, and give you a note to the bank which I hope will enable you to cash it without difficulty."

He sat down at a desk and wrote the check and the letter.

"Now listen," he said. "You can't do business in the clothes you have on, and——"

"Oh, I have a Sunday suit," broke in Joe.

"It won't do. First of all, go to a good hotel. I would suggest the Astor House. It is old-fashioned, but will answer your purpose. Next, go to the clothing store, of which I have written the address on this slip of paper. Rig yourself out brand-new from head to foot. You will find that they sell everything from hat to shoes. Buy no cheap stuff, but the best. Then you will look like a man and feel like a man, and will be ready to do a man's work. Lose no time. The sooner you can get back here the better, and if you meet with success I shall then show myself in Reddington and take a hand in the game. Now be off with you, and look out you don't get caught leaving the grounds or you will spoil all."

Joe left then, and gained the road without being seen.

He went directly home and, awakening his mother, informed her that business called him to New York.

It was a great event in Hustling Joe Brown's life, this call to New York.

Never yet had this bright boy seen even one of the smaller cities of the United States.

Consequently his ideas as to what lay before him were exceedingly limited.

The long ride of that day opened his eyes, however, for it took him through several sizeable cities.

Joe thought the first one immense. Before he had seen the last he was wondering what New York could be like.

(To be continued.)

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

AERO ENGINES WITH 18 CYLINDERS.

By leaps and bounds the stationary type aero-plane engines are increasing in power rating in the stern competition between the Central Powers and the Allied nations. In England Mr. Louis Coatalen has been doing commendable work along these lines, and among his latest products is the 18-cylinder Sunbeam-Coatalen engine, which develops 475 brake horsepower, and has no fewer than half a dozen magnetos and an equal number of carbureters. The arrangement of the cylinders is interesting: 12 of the cylinders are arranged as in the usual twin-six practise, while the remaining six are arranged in the upper center, forming what is styled the "broad arrow" type.

WHISKY \$6 A QUART IN MAINE.

With the supply of distilled liquors rushed into Maine before the bone dry law became effective on July 1 being gradually consumed, the prices of all brands of whisky, gin and other hard liquors are climbing. In Portland, rye whisky, which sold for \$1.50 a quart before the election of Governor Milliken and the election of Sheriff Graham, has jumped in price to \$4.50 and \$5 a quart, and it is almost impossible to obtain.

When it is possible to get gin, the men engaged in the illegal sale get from \$4 to \$6 a quart. The better grades of whisky have entirely disappeared.

The advent of coast patrol and harbor regulations forbidding motorboats to enter and leave port after sunset has greatly curtailed the illegal liquor traffic.

WHY DO I LAUGH WHEN TICKLED?

Practically the same things happen when we are tickled, and explains why you laugh when tickled, says the Book of Wonders. When some one tickles the bottom of your feet or your ribs or another part of your body it produces, in most cases, the same effect on the brain as the laugh-producing sound or sight, and arouses the same combination of muscles and nerves to activity. It is just like pushing the button of an electric bell. When you push the button the contact produces the spark which sets the machinery of the bell in motion and the bell rings and will continue to ring as long as you keep your finger on the button, or until the spark-producing power of the battery is gone. Then, as in the case of the bell, you cease to laugh, because the spark that produced the laugh combination is gone. That is why some things tickle some people very much and do not affect others. Some are not so sensitive to the laugh-producing combination as others. After the thing that tickles you has been going on for some time you are not tickled into laughter any more, because the impression on the brain ceases to be as strong.

A REAR CAR FOR MOTOR-CYCLES.

The motor-cycle in its modern forms is just as dependable a vehicle as its larger brother, the automobile and it provides a very economical means of transportation. Motor-cycles with side-car attachments are very common and the fitting of clutch control and change-speed gearing has made it easy for the relatively low-powered motor-cycle engines to handle much heavier loads than would seem possible. One of the latest attachments designed to increase the load-carrying capacity of the two-wheelers is a form of rear car that has its own independent wheels and axle. This attaches to the motor-cycle in much the same way that a wagon is hitched to a horse. As the tractive pull comes in the center of the rear car, the machine does not tend to steer to one side as when a side car is attached and the combination is easily controlled. An outfit has been devised for military and police purposes and is known as a "riot car." Four men are easily carried on the rear car and one man on the motor-cycle saddle. A substantial delivery box could be substituted for the seats adapting the machine for commercial purposes. A special armored body with provisions for carrying a machine gun and two operatives, has also been devised by the makers.

"HANDY MEN" WANTED.

"Handy men" having some knowledge in any of the technical work of the new regiments of Engineers of the National Army can now volunteer therein, and see active service in France. Young men eighteen to twenty-one are most desirable; in fact, many experienced officers believe that 18-to-21 boys make the best soldiers. The consent of parents is not now required for the enlistment of such. Many parents, noting that their boys are anxious to do their patriotic share in this trying hour, see the wisdom of their volunteering in the Engineers, so that when this war is over, they will have a mechanical trade such as railroading, house construction, electricity, waterworks, bridge work, iron work, sawmill work, mining, etc. Authority has been received from the Adjutant General's office to accept applicants for enlistment in white cavalry regiments in order to fill up vacancies. This branch has been closed to enlistment for more than three months, and it is expected that the few vacancies existing will soon be filled. Another branch of the service which was closed to enlistment early in the war is now open, authority having been received to accept applicants for the Coast Artillery of the National Guard. Call at nearest army recruiting station for further information, or write to Major J. E. Bloom, U. S. A., 266 Market street, Newark, N. J.

FACTS WORTH READING

FELL IN MARKED BILL TRAY.

Reginald Van Nostrand, a clerk in the Sag Harbor, L. I., post-office, and said to be of one of the best-known families there, was indicted in the Brooklyn Federal Court on the charge of robbing the mails in taking a \$10 note from a letter addressed to the Sears-Roebuck Company, Chicago.

Van Nostrand was arrested the other night by Inspector Brown and Leamy, who had been tracing thefts from the mail. They put a marked note in a letter which they handed to Van Nostrand just as the mail was being made up.

When the letter was found on the train between Sag Harbor and Bridgehampton without the money, the inspectors returned to the post-office, searched Van Nostrand and say they found it in his clothes.

MAN ESCAPES DEATH IN 160-FOOT PLUNGE.

Andrew Lashinsky, a rigger, working on the roof of Philadelphia's big city hall, escaped death by an almost miraculous circumstance.

A scaffold on which he was working 160 feet from the ground broke and he fell head first. Sixty feet down, a single one-inch rope from another scaffold hung like a hangman's noose. By a spectacular trick of fate, one of Lashinsky's flying legs went into it and drew the noose tight. His fall was stopped with a jerk and he hung, head downward, swinging in space.

The man managed to swing himself back and forward till he found a resting-place on the ledge of a window not big enough to permit him to get inside the building. Workmen tore away the window sides and pulled him to safety.

WHY SOLIDERS WEAR WRIST WATCHES.

Replying to a question from his audience, a British officer lecturing in Chicago explained why all officers wear wrist watches. He described an advance from the trenches as an illustration, telling how every move was made on a prearranged schedule, the artillery throwing a curtain of fire for a certain number of seconds, while the infantry advanced twenty yards, then lifting it to twenty yards further ahead, while the infantry made another advance, and so on.

"All this shell fire," he said, "is being done by artillery far behind. The artillery officer depends most of all upon his watch. He sits with a telephone glued to his ear and field-glasses in his hands. He has no time to be fumbling for his watch. A minute's error in changing the range would mean that the shells would be falling into his own advancing troops. Nor has the officer leading his men across No Man's Land any time to be fumbling for his watch."

GET THREE CROPS OF BROOM CORN IN TEXAS.

Harvesting three crops of broom corn from one planting in a single season, the yield from each cutting being about one ton to the acre of broom corn, is what is being accomplished in this section of the lower Rio Grande Valley this year.

The average price received for the brush, which is used in the manufacture of high-grade brooms, is \$310 per ton, or a total of \$930 per acre. In this region, which only a few years ago was a wilderness of mesquite trees and prickly pear, situated more than 100 miles from the nearest railroad outlet, there is being rapidly developed the greatest broom corn growing industry in the United States.

There is being grown here this season 40,000 acres of this product and the extremely high prices which dealers are paying for the brush are bringing fortunes to many farmers. The fact that the growing season is practically continuous throughout the twelve months of the year makes the possibilities of the industry unusually attractive.

The first planting is usually made in January, and as rapidly as one crop is matured it is cut and from the stubble there is quickly produced a second and third crop. All of the broom corn in the valley territory is grown by means of irrigation.

BEARS LIKE BERRIES.

That bears like blackberries has long been known; but the fact was proved to the entire satisfaction of Elias Peterson and John Larson of Highland, Pa., while they were out picking berries in the vicinity of Maple Run, last month. Peterson and Larson left their home early in the morning with two ten-quart pails each to pick berries. They had both succeeded in filling one pail when the lunch hour arrived and they decided to eat.

Selecting a shady spot under a small tree they seated themselves on the ground and ate their lunch, after which they decided to leave their well-filled berry pails under a log near by while they picked enough berries to fill their other pails.

About four o'clock in the afternoon they succeeded in getting their other two pails filled, and started to the spot where they had eaten their lunch and left their full berry pails. They reached the scene, and to their complete surprise discovered an old female bear and two large cubs eating the berries they had left under the log.

Peterson, badly frightened, let out a yelp, following which the old bruin turned around and growled at the two men, who dropped their pails of berries and started running home.

Both men returned to the forest the following day to get their pails, but found three of them empty and about three quarts of berries in the fourth.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 24, 1917.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher,
166 West 23d St., New York

Good Current News Articles

Hunting came high for Martin Pennet of No. 499 Summer street, Paterson, N. J., in the Clifton Police Court, when Judge Watterson fined him \$20 for each of twenty-five sparrows he trapped and killed—a total of \$500. In default of the fine Pennett will spend 1,000 days in jail.

The operators on the Hickel mine, south of Baxter Springs, Kan., recently went into a cave of lead. It was 35 feet long, eight feet wide and four feet high. Tons of pure lead were taken out of it. Pieces of the mineral measured from two to ten inches in thickness. This mine has yielded an unusual amount of pure cube lead.

The State Department has declined to grant passports to wives of army officers who expect to be in France indefinitely, says a Washington despatch to the New York World, in pursuance of a policy adopted by the department. It will, the despatch adds, issue no passports to women who desire to go to France or England unless they present proof that they are to be regularly employed in war work. Reports received in Washington indicate that there are entirely too many American women in the allied countries in view of the food shortage.

The Navy League announced recently that Mrs. George Dewey had consented to act as sponsor for the women who are knitting for the league and that hereafter gifts for the men and officers of the fleet will be presented in her name. As far as can be ascertained, Secretary Daniels will offer no objections to this plan. "Naval stations have received shipments of comfort articles sent in the name of individuals," says a statement issued by the Comforts Committee. "More than 23,000 sets of comfort garments have been distributed to men of the navy since the day Mr. Daniels first sought to cripple our work."

The Navy Department is asking Congress for an appropriation of \$240,000 to purchase 3,157 acres of land at Stump Neck, below the Indian Head proving grounds; and \$157,000 for 1,175 acres adjoining at Cornwallis Neck, for the purpose of moving the armor pits so as to permit an attack at a distance. It is explained, in asking for these appropriations, that the armor butts as they are now placed are in the valley and within 500 feet of the guns, so there is no room for attacking armor at long range, which is essential. The department wishes to gain information on the effect of angle fire, the effect of lines of the shells, and to land shells at the maximum range that this property will give them, of 21,000 yards, and then recover the shells to see the fuse action and the action of flight. The acquisition of this land will also do away with the present practice of the men on the butts having to take shelter when the guns are fired for ranging or other purposes.

Grins and Chuckles

The Pedestrian—That brick you just dropped hit me on the head. The Bricklayer (on the scaffold)—That's all right; you can keep it.

"If an empty barrel weighs 10 pounds, what can you fill it with to make it weigh 7 pounds?" "Have to give it up." "Fill it full of holes."

"I tell you, hearing those star opera singers on the phonograph is almost as good as hearing them on the stage." "Far better. You can shut them off whenever you like on the phonograph."

"Now, Willie," said the Sunday-school teacher, "can you tell me why Satan tempted Eve first?" "Oh, I suppose he wanted to be polite," answered Willie. "Ladies always come first, you know."

His Lordship—Prisoner, you have the right of challenging any of the jury if you desire to do so. Prisoner—Right y'are, guv'nor. I'll fight that little black-whiskered bloke at the end if he'll step outside.

The youngster had just been told the story of Daniel in the lions' den, and the question had been put to him: "What do you think Daniel did the very first thing when he found he was saved from the lions?" The child reflected a moment, and then replied: "I suppose he telephoned home to his wife to tell her he was all right."

The wise old doctor was talking seriously to his little patient. "My lad," he advised, "no matter what you eat, always chew each mouthful thirty times." But Jimmy shook his head significantly. "That wouldn't do at our house, doctor." "And why not, my son?" "Because I'd always be hungry. My eight brothers and sisters would clear the table before I got through with that one mouthful."

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

BARNACLES ON SHIPS.

One of our big warships was brought into dock the other day for a cleaning. Two hundred men worked all day scraping off 600 tons of animal and plant growth from its sides and bottom. This tremendous quantity of sea life had accumulated in less than two years, during which time the ship had traveled many thousand miles, says Popular Science. The weight of the barnacles was so great that from 25 to 40 per cent. extra coal was consumed in maintaining the vessel's speed.

NEW WAX FOR CANDLES.

From prehistoric times the Indians of Ecuador have utilized a wax found on certain species of tall palms for making candles. This wax occurs on the tree trunks in granular form, each tree furnishing about 50 pounds. The trees grow in great numbers on the mountains along the coast. Samples of this wax were sent to France and to Germany before the war, and the chemists in both countries made favorable reports, but the war terminated further negotiations. One chemist stated that it could be used in the manufacture of explosives.

BIRDS FLY HIGH.

An officer of the French Flying Corps has taken exceptional opportunities to record observations on the flight of birds and the height at which they fly, especially when migrating. Some of his notes are published in the Pall Mall Gazette. Swallows, he says, seem to prefer an altitude of 2,000 feet, whereas the wild duck usually flies at 5,000 feet. They are remarkable also for the marvelous uniformity with which they follow their leader. The turns and twists are taken with such simultaneity that a flock appears to turn and wheel automatically, so extraordinarily together do they move. When climbing they fly at about sixty-five miles an hour, and are good for seventy once they have got their height and have spread out to let themselves go.

Last March he met some plovers at 6,500 feet, which is the highest altitude that he has seen a company of birds.

VINEGAR COMES HIGH IN NEBRASKA.

Confidence men are gleaning much real coin in this territory since the dry law took effect. One slick-looking stranger stopped at a farm home near here and showed the man of the place several samples of what he persisted in calling vinegar of a very fine character.

When he said "very fine character," he winked at the farmer and told him to take a drink at his ex-

pense. The sample "vinegar" was none other than a fair quality of whisky.

When the farmer ordered several gallons of the "vinegar," he had to sign a paper which said so and so much vinegar had been sold to so and so, and that it would come to the depot at such and such a date.

Came the day for the arrival of the booze. Many farmers in the vicinity made trips to the depot. "Vinegar" seemed to be at a premium.

When the casks had been tapped and contents sampled, it was found that the stuff was vinegar, and that the fellows had paid several dollars for each gallon of something they might have bought from their home merchants for a few cents per gallon.

No arrests have been made, since the sharks are well within the law. They sell vinegar and vinegar is delivered.

DID MEN LIVE 900 YEARS?

When reading of people who lived long years ago and especially when reading about the length of their lives, we are told that in the old days people lived longer than they do now. Some of the early historical records speak of single individuals who lived hundreds of years. There is great doubt as to whether these statements are founded on fact. In thinking about this we must first take into consideration that these records of long ages were recorded at a time when men had no accurate ideas of the actual passage of long periods of time, such as a year. They did not have our calendar as a basis for figuring at all. Learned men now tell us that the actual age of men who lived at the time these records of great ages were recorded probably lived shorter lives than we do now, and that what they record as a period of one year was probably a much shorter period than one year, says the Book of Wonders.

It is true beyond the question of a doubt that the people of to-day live longer on the average than people who lived ten, twenty or more years ago.

In other words, the average period of life has increased steadily. This is due to the fact that we have taken great care of our bodies; have improved the conditions in which we live, and made them more sanitary; have learned to fight and check and eradicate diseases which only a few years ago we could not prevent people dying of when they once contracted them, and we know from the records which we keep that actually people live longer on the average to-day than only a few years ago, and it is safe to say that they live longer now on the average than at any time in the world's history.

GOLD PLATED COMBINATION SET.
Gold plated combination set, with turquoise stone. Price 10c. each by mail, postpaid.
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JAPANESE MAGIC PAPER.
The latest, greatest and best little trick perfected by the ingenious Japanese is called Yaka Hula. It consists of two packages of specially prepared paper, one a sensitized medium, and the other a developing medium. The process of manufacture is a secret. By wetting a white sheet, and pressing a pink sheet on top of it, the white sheet will develop quaint photographic scenes, such as landscapes of Japan, portraits of Japanese characters, pictures of peculiar buildings, Gods, temples, etc. These pictures are replicas of actual photographs, and print up in a beautiful sepia brown color. Intensely interesting for both old and young. Price, 12c. per package, by mail, postpaid.
WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

RUBBER TACKS.
They come six in a box. A wonderful imitation of the real tack. Made of rubber. The box in which they come is the ordinary tack box. This is a great parlor entertainer and you can play a lot of tricks with the tacks. Place them in the palm of your hand, point upward. Then slap your other hand over the tacks and it will seem as if you are committing suicide. Or you can show the tacks and then put them in your mouth and chew them, making believe you have swallowed them. Your friends will think you are a magician. Then, again, you can exhibit the tacks and then quickly push one in your cheek or somebody else's cheek and they will shriek with fear. Absolutely harmless and a very practical and funny joke. Price, by mail, 10c. a box of six tacks; 3 for 25c., postpaid.
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"KNOCK-OUT" CARD TRICK.—Five cards are shown, front and back, and there are no two cards alike. You place some of them in a handkerchief and ask any person to hold them by the corners in full view of the audience. You now take the remaining cards and request anyone to name any card shown. This done, you repeat the name of the card and state that you will cause it to invisibly leave your hand and pass into the handkerchief, where it will be found among the other cards. At the word "Go!" you show that the chosen card has vanished, leaving absolutely only two cards. The handkerchief is unfolded by any person, and in it is found the identical card. Recommended very highly. Price 10c. each by mail, postpaid.
C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

SHERIFF BADGE.
With this badge attached to your coat or vest you can show the boys that you are a sheriff, and if they don't behave themselves you might lock them up. It is a beautiful nickel-plated badge, 2 1/4 by 2 1/2 inches in size, with the words "Sheriff 23." By Heck" in nickel letters on the face of it, with a pin on the back for attaching it to your clothing. Send for one and have some fun with the boys.
Price 15 cents, or 3 for 40 cents; sent by mail, postpaid.
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DEVIL'S LOCK PUZZLE.
Without exception, this is the hardest one of all. And yet, if you have the directions you can very easily do it. It consists of a ring passed through two links on shafts. The shanks of this puzzle are always in the way. Get one and learn how to take the ring off. Price 15c. by mail, postpaid, with directions.
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ELECTRIC CIGAR CASE.
This handsome cigar case appears to be filled with fine cigars. If your friend smokes ask him to have a cigar with you. As he reaches out for one the cigars, like a flash, instantly disappear into the case entirely out of sight, greatly to his surprise and astonishment. You can beg his pardon and state you thought there were some cigars left in the case. A slight pressure on sides of case causes the cigars to disappear as if by magic. By touching a wire at bottom of case the cigars instantly appear again in their proper position in the case. As real tobacco is used they are sure to deceive any one. It is one of the best practical jokes of the season. A novelty with which you can have lots of fun.
Price 35 cents, sent by parcel post, postpaid.
C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., N. Y.

MAGIC CARD BOX.—A very cleverly made box of exchanging or vanishing cards. In fact, any number of tricks of this character can be performed by it. A very necessary magical accessory. Price, 15c.
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LUCKY PENNY POCKET PIECE.
This handsome pocket piece is made of aluminum, resembling somewhat in size and appearance a silver dollar. In the center of the pocket piece is a new one-cent U. S. coin, inserted in such a way that it cannot be removed. (U. S. laws prevent our showing this coin in our engraving). On one side of the pocket piece are the words, "Lucky penny pocket piece; I bring good luck," and the design of a horseshoe. On the opposite side, "I am your mascot," "Keep me and never go broke," and two sprigs of four-leafed clover. These handsome pocket pieces are believed by many to be harbingers of good luck.
Price 12 cents; 3 for 30 cents; by mail, postpaid.
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THE BALANCING BIRD.
It measures more than four inches from tip to tip of wings, and will balance perfectly on the tip of your finger nail, on the point of a lead pencil, or on any pointed instrument, only the tip of the bill resting on the nail or pencil point, the whole body of the bird being suspended in the air with nothing to rest on. It will not fall off unless shaken off. A great novelty. Wonderful, amusing and instructive.
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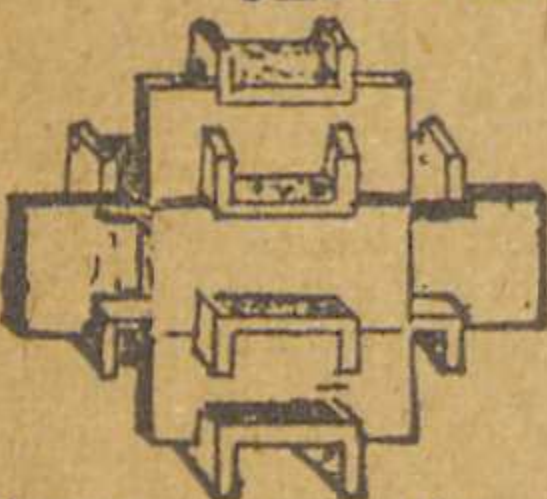
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Four cards are placed in a hat. One card is removed and the balance are now shown to be changed to blank cards. The cards can be thoroughly examined. Price 10c. by mail, postpaid.

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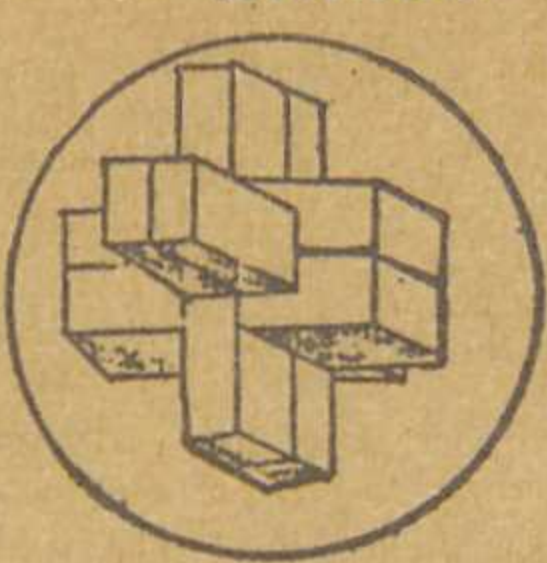
These dancers are set in a gilt frame, the size of our engraving. By lighting a match and moving it in circular form at the back they can be made to dance furiously, the heat from the match warming them up. If you want to see an up-to-date tango dance send for this pretty charm.

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Price, 10 cents, or 3 for 25 cents; by mail, postpaid.

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Diamond rings or studs of half-inch and one inch in diameter are heard of in stories only. We have them imitated by prodigious sparkling stones which will deceive the glance of any spectator. Price, by mail, postpaid, small size, 25c each; large size, 35c each.

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